

T H E
Parliamentary Register;
O R
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES
O F T H E
HOUSE OF COMMONS;

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF

The most interesting SPEECHES and MOTIONS; accurate
Copies of the most remarkable LETTERS and PAPERS;
of the most material EVIDENCE, PETITIONS, &c.
laid before and offered to the HOUSE,

DURING THE

SECOND SESSION of the SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT

O F

G R E A T B R I T A I N.

V O L. XXXII.

L O N D O N

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I N D E X.

T O T H E

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THE

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

In the SECOND SESSION of the
Seventeenth Parliament of GREAT BRITAIN,

Appointed to be holden at WESTMINSTER,
On THURSDAY the 25th of NOVEMBER, 1790.

Friday, 2d March, 1792.

THERE not being a sufficient number of Members to ballot for a Committee on the Cirencester Election, no business was done.

Monday, 5th March.

Mr. Chancellor PITT gave notice he should on Wednesday next propose to the House an establishment for their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York, as recommended in His Majesty's speech at the opening of the present session of Parliament. Preparatory to this he moved, " That the House
" shall on Wednesday resolve itself into a Committee of the
" whole House, to take into consideration that part of His
" Majesty's speech, which recommends an establishment to be
" made on their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of

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“ York.” Ordered. Also, “ That the treaty made between us and Prussia on that event be referred to that Committee.” Ordered.

Mr. Chancellor PITT also gave notice, that to-morrow he should bring forward the consideration of another part of the King’s speech, which related to the funding of a sum of money to be appropriated to the reduction of the national debt. His proposition went to alter in some degree the plan laid down in the year 1786, and as it was a matter of magnitude, he should make it the subject of a bill, the purport of which he should explain to-morrow.

Major MAITLAND gave notice, that, he should on Monday next bring forward the consideration of the war in India.

Mr. Chancellor PITT wished the honourable gentleman to state what the nature was of what he intended to bring forward,

Major MAITLAND said, he had two objects which he meant to be included in what he should submit in this business; the origin of the war under the conduct of Lord Cornwallis, with his correspondence with the Nizam, and the present situation of that war.

Major Maitland then said, he had a petition founded upon one which had been presented to the Speaker, which, no doubt, from a principle that was solid, as well as practice that was prudent, he was pleased to reject. It was a petition from Messrs. Wallis and Troward, Law Agents of his Highness the Nabob of the Carnatic, praying that the House would give them leave to present the petition of his Highness the Nabob as his Law Agents. Leave was given.

Major Maitland then moved, that the original petition be now received.

The SPEAKER said, that this petition was presented to him by the Law Agents of the Nabob, received from him under his seal, stating certain facts, requesting the Speaker to deliver it to the House, which he declined.

The objection which he had to complying with this request, did not refer to the petition, nor the manner in which it was authenticated, but was solely on the point of regularity of the proceedings of the House. Had he received the petition in this manner, the question, “ That this petition be now re-

“ceived, or brought up, could not be put.” The check on improper petitions would thus be done away, if he had made himself the channel of communication of petitions, or any other paper presented to him in this manner. It was true that a vote of the House early in the session gave the Speaker power to present papers, under particular circumstances, to the House; but he thought that this instance would have exceeded the proper bounds of his power, and therefore he returned this petition to Messrs. Wallis and Troward, that they might not be debarred from otherwise proceeding as they thought fit.

The question was then put, and the petition was brought up.

It was entitled, a representation and petition, of his Highness the Nabob Wau lau Jau Ummeer ul Hind Omdat ul Mulk Aufuph ud Dowlah Unwer ud Deih Cawn Bahauder Zuphar Jung Sepah Sular, Sovereign and Soubahdar of the Carnatic Payenghaut and Ballaghaut; and set forth, that the Empire of the Moguls, in India, has subsisted for several ages, dispensing, by favour of the Almighty God, the blessings of a regular Government to a large division of the inhabitants of the earth: that one supreme monarch, the King of the Moguls, rules over all the kingdoms, provinces, and dominions, of the said extensive empire: that the several kingdoms, or provinces, are governed by Princes, who derive their right to authority from the King of the Moguls by letters patent under the great seal of the empire and a solemn investiture on such conditions as may have been mentioned and ordered in such letters patent: that inferior rulers hold certain districts under the said Nabobs or Princes, by whose Saned and solemn investiture, the authority and rights of such inferior rulers are constituted: that those inferior rulers pay immediate allegiance and obedience, with a stated annual tribute, to the said Nabobs, for their country, besides performing military service in war, and when peace comes paying their proportion of the expences incurred, estimated by the usual amount of their respective revenues; that, upon the dutiful behaviour of such inferior rulers, the possessions of the father are granted to the son, or nearest legitimate kinsman, by a regular Saned or commission, and a new investiture, upon paying the accustomed fine of succession: that no succession is legal, nor can the successor execute any legal act

of power, until he has received such Saned or commission, and such investiture, from his immediate superior the Nabob, who is Lord Paramount of the country: that, when such inferior rulers or vassals commit any great public crime, refuse to pay their annual tribute, evade or disobey orders in attending their superior in war with all their forces, when they abet enemies, encourage conspiracies, or in any dangerous degree prove faithless to their immediate Lord, they are fined, imprisoned, or subjected to absolute forfeiture, in proportion to their crimes: that, upon the extinction of the legitimate male line of such vassals, and their lawful male kindred, their territories fall of course to the disposal of their liege Lord: that the present Nabob of the Carnatic, as well as his father Anwar ul dien Cawn Bahauder, have been Nabobs or Princes of that kingdom or country by all the legal and regular grants and investitures of the empire of the Moguls: that the present Nabob succeeded his father in the year of the Christian æra 1749, by all the legal and regular grants, as Prince of the whole kingdom of the Carnatic, from the river Cristna, to Cape Comorin: that such grants, and such investitures, were renewed to him, with additional rights, immunities, franchises, and privileges, by the successive Kings of the Moguls, till at length, more than four and twenty years ago, he received an altumgah, or free grant, for ever, from the present King Shâh Allum: that, by this grant of total independence, the allegiance of all the inhabitants of the Carnatic, whether natives or Europeans, was transferred to him, as it had been possessed by their former Sovereigns the Kings of Delhi: that the Nabob's right to the government, royalty, and dominion, of the whole Carnatic, has to the present day remained unimpaired, undiminished, and unimpeached, by any act, deed, compact, treaty, conquest, or other ground or pretence whatsoever: that he is of right, and *de facto*, independent of any claim of sovereignty by any Prince, Power, or State upon earth: that he is the legal, undisputed, and acknowledged successor of the King of the Moguls, in all his prerogatives and absolute rights, over the whole Carnatic: that his Highness's father, as well as himself, became known to the great and gracious Kings of Great Britain, King George the Second, and his present Majesty King George the Third: that His Majesty King George the Second, in letters under his

royal signature, and countersigned by the principal Secretary of his kingdom, promised his support to the present Nabob, as an ally who merited and should receive his protection: that, in consequence of the reciprocal friendship between the King of Great Britain and the Nabob, and in consideration of the undoubted rights of the latter, he was guaranteed in the possession of the whole Carnatic, by his Britannic Majesty and the French King, by the eleventh article of the definitive treaty of peace, concluded at Paris in the year of the Christian æra 1763: that His Majesty the King of Great Britain, acknowledging and considering the Nabob as Sovereign of the Carnatic, wrote him many gracious letters under his own royal hand, treating him as an independent Prince, and promising him and his family his royal and august protection: that His Majesty sent to the Nabob, as an independent Sovereign, two several embassies under the Great Seal of Great Britain: that his rights to an absolute independence are so self-evident and undeniable, that the East India Company, when on the worst terms with the Nabob, declared solemnly on their records, that they must acknowledge him to be a Sovereign Prince: that the English East India Company settled factories in the Carnatic, as merchants carrying on their business as such under the protection of the Nabobs of the country: that, conformable to their confined situation, they addressed their immediate superior the Nabob by *arzee* or petition: that Anwar ul dien Cawn Bahauder, the father of the present Nabob, when he arrived in his government of the Carnatic, found them in their factory, surrounded by something more like a garden wall than a fort: that the injustice of the French induced Anwar ul dien Cawn Bahauder to support the English, as well as himself, against such injustice: that Awnar ul dien being killed in battle by the French, and his son, the present Nabob, having succeeded him, Ahmed Shah, the King of the Moguls, ordered his subjects, the English factories settled in the Carnatic, to obey him the Nabob, as the mediate power between them and their sovereign, the King of the Moguls: that the governors of the said factories wrote *arzees* or petitions of thanks to the Mogul, for appointing the present Nabob to rule over them: that during the long war, which the ambition and injustice of the French raised

against the Nabob, the English Company uniting themselves with him as faithful subjects of the Mogul, their joint exertions which were powerfully assisted by the King of Great Britain, became at length victorious over all their enemies: that the Company's servants, after this signal success, solemnly, under the hand of their Governor, assured the Nabob, that their wish and resolution were to carry on their business under his protection, as they had done under the protection of former Soubadars: that the Company were so thoroughly satisfied that the Nabob was the legal and rightful Sovereign of the Carnatic, that they wrote circular letters to all the inferior rulers, who governed different districts of the country, and who, taking advantage of the misfortunes of the late times, had acted a false and undutiful part towards their liege Lord: that among other rulers of less note, they wrote to the Rajah of Tanjore to obey orders and commands, signifying by such communication, that, should that vassal prove refractory, they, as good subjects, would unite their arms with those of the Nabob against the Rajah as a rebel: that, when the business of the country was settled, the presidency of Fort Saint George, as representatives of the English Company, entered into an agreement with the Nabob, with this expression, "being obedient to him:" that they declared that, "by the blessing of God, the whole Carnatic was intirely and firmly established in the Nabob and his posterity:" that they solemnly engaged, that as long as the English settlements shall remain in the Deckan, Bengal, and Hindostan, the Company's people are diligently to use their endeavours in promoting and assisting the affairs of the Carnatic, in its obedience to the Nabob, and in maintaining firm friendship and regard: that the mind of the Nabob, being swayed by reciprocal sentiments of regard towards the English Company, granted them a large jaghire, which they still hold under him as Lord Paramount: that the grant of such jaghire not only promoted their opulence, but raised them to their political situation in the Carnatic, which is that of perpetual Jaghiredars: that, after the fortunate settlement of the public troubles, peace, the wish of all good men, became the commencement of misfortune to the Nabob: that the Company's servants having, by the powerful aid of the King of Great Britain, been of very signal and very effectual

service in expelling the enemies of the Carnatic, began to mix their hands with its internal politics : that, under the pretence of being unable to obtain justice by force from the Rajah of Tanjore, for his rebellious, treacherous, and dangerous behaviour during the war, they entered into a treaty with him : that the Nabob, deeming the terms of the treaty very far from being adequate, was very unwilling to sign it ; and that the president of Fort Saint George put the Nabob's chop by force to the said treaty : that the Nabob will not ascribe the treaty to the interests of individuals, but will only observe, that it was a glaring encroachment on his just and independent rights, as Sovereign of all the inhabitants of The Carnatic : that the Company's servants having forgot the object of their institution, which was trade, in the length of the war turned their thoughts to other views : that by pressing the Nabob to pay his debt to the Company, which he had incurred for their aid, during the troubles, and that in instalments too large for his revenue, he was forced to involve himself by borrowing money of individuals at a great interest : that thus he became to be pressed by nearly the same persons in a double capacity ; on the one side as managers of the public funds, on the other as partly the proprietors of the private debts : that distress thus began, and was followed up by various misfortunes : that the Company's government, on the score of his distresses, assumed a high tone, and as creditors of the Nabob began to lessen his authority by interfering with his government : that, to render him more subservient to their own domineering spirit, they very indutritiously and successfully concealed from the Nabob his being guaranteed in all his rights by the eleventh article of the treaty of Paris : that he only heard of that treaty at last through the humanity of an English gentleman, after the Presidency of Fort Saint George threatened to reduce him the Nabob to a mere nominal Nabob like *him* of Bengal : that the Company's servants, availing themselves of the Nabob's ignorance of the treaty, and of his want of access to the justice of the British government and nation, pressed and oppressed him as avarice or other passions prevailed ; that they entered into a war without his consent, but in his name, and charged him with the expences of it as his war : that he was thus exposed to a double misfortune, his country being ravaged by the enemy,

and being forced to extort from his exhausted subjects such sums as the servants of the Company choose to charge him with on account of their masters: that the Nabob, worn out by oppressions, and harassed by extortions, resolved to convey his complaints to the ears of his protector and the guarantee of his dominions, His Majesty the King of Great Britain: that he wrote a letter to the Earl of Chatham, then His Majesty's Minister, and who had corresponded with him the Nabob, as an ally of Great Britain, ten years before: that, in consequence of his letter, His Majesty was pleased to appoint an ambassador, under the Great Seal, to inquire into the grievances of the Nabob on the spot: that the inferior and subordinate rulers of provinces and districts of the Carnatic, perceiving that the Nabob's authority was invaded by the Company's servants, became refractory, disobedient, and treacherous, evading their annual tribute, refusing their military services, corresponding with rebels, and abetting enemies: that the most rich, and consequently the most powerful, the Rajah of Tanjore, though highly favoured in an agreement made in the year 1762, became, perhaps, upon that very account, the least attentive to his duty, and the most obstinate in his public and constitutional delinquency: that, small as the tribute was which he agreed to pay by that treaty, he evaded the payment of it by various and false pretences: that he encouraged and corresponded with the rebel Joseph Cawn, that he abetted the invasion of Hyder Ali, and gave him money and provisions for his army: that he invited the Mahrattas to the Carnatic, and carried on intrigues with the different European factories and settlements on the Coast: that he refused to perform his military services when war was in the country, though bound to give it upon the requisition of the superior: that as a proof of his connivance with Hyder Ali, that chief, when superior in the field, insisted upon his being included as his friend in the treaty which he forced upon the servants of the Company at the gates of Madras: that he refused to pay his proportion of the expences of the war, though possessed of a very ample revenue, and his country being situated in the very heart of the Carnatic, he was protected from all danger by the exertions of the Nabob and the English nation: that the conduct of this Rajah was altogether inexcusable, will appear from the following

facts : that the part of the Carnatic which is called Tanjore is, as has been just mentioned, surrounded on three sides by the rest of the Carnatic : that the fertility of the country depends on the river Cavery, which, contrary to its natural course, is forced into the province of Tanjore, by a mound of earth, in a place beyond its limits : that from that circumstance, and others unnecessary to be named, Tanjore has been always dependent on its neighbours : that when a Hindoo sovereign reigned over the Carnatic, the Naigs of Tanjore were his feudatories, vassals, and subjects : that when the Hindoo empire declined, it became a part of the conquest of the Patan kingdoms of the Decan ; and that when trouble and invasions directed their forces and attention to another quarter, Tanjore, never intended, by its situation and nature, to be a separate government, became dependent on the Rajahs of Trichinopoly : that in the years of the Christian æra 1686 and 1687, that great, wise, and fortunate king of the Moguls, the illustrious Allumgeer, having reduced the kingdoms of the Decan, became sovereign of the Carnatic : that Allumgeer, having constituted one of his nobles, Zulphuear Cawn Bahauder, Nabob of Arcot and the Carnatic, ordered him to reduce the Naig of Tanjore, who had raised troubles by abetting the designs of the enemies of the king : that when the said Nabob was on his march to displace the Naig, the said Naig made the most humble submissions to him the Nabob as his immediate superior : that, in consequence of his submission, he was restored to his government, upon the usual terms given to feudatories and vassals ; that is, upon paying an annual tribute of 300,000*l.* besides performing military service, with all his forces : that to the said Naig, whose name was Sahu-je, succeeded Shurfa-je ; and to him Babu-Saheb, both of whom paid their annual tribute, performed their military services, besides paying the usual fine of succession upon their respective investitures to their immediate liege Lord, the Nabob of Arcot : that, after some troubles, which were settled and composed by the decision of the Divan, or Council of the Nabob of the Carnatic, Sahu-je, the second of the name, became Rajah, by the commission, creation, and investiture of the said Nabob : that Sahu-je, becoming disobedient and refractory, was afterwards imprisoned by his liege Lord Sepadar Ali,

Nabob of Arcot, who made his own preceptor, Sheik Affud, Governor of Tanjore: that, in troubles which followed, Sahuje was again restored; but, being a second time deprived of Tanjore, one Pertaub Sing was raised to the dignity of Rajah, by Saned of Abdalla Cawn, Nabob of the Carnatic; in which he was afterwards confirmed by the Nabob Anwar ul Dien Cawn, the father of the present Nabob: that Pertaub Sing becoming negligent in paying his tribute, and otherwise refractory, Anwar ul Dien Cawn Nabob of the Carnatic, was obliged to march against him, and, having defeated and chastised him, received him to his protection, upon paying his arrears, and the expence of the expedition: that the English Company's Government fired their guns, and made other demonstrations of joy, when they heard of the Nabob's victory over his vassal, and congratulated him in an address on that victory: that when the Nabob was unfortunately killed in battle by the French, and other rebels, in July 1749, much trouble ensued in the Carnatic: that a war being kindled, in which the French assisted a false Nabob, and the English, as good subjects of the Empire, having stood forth in support of the legal Nabob, his present Highness of the Carnatic, Pertaub Sing, proved false to his immediate Lord: that he evaded the payment of his annual tribute, and refused compliance upon requisition of the military services he was bound to perform by the nature of his tenure: that he secretly abetted the French, and corresponded with their rulers, whilst he amused, betrayed, and deceived, his Lord Paramount, and his friends the English: that by these means he saved his revenue, and became rich, and thus, by his influence or his power, induced the English Presidency to make the said treaty of 1762: that, however, the treaty of 1762 related only to matters of account, and the future amount of the annual peishcush, or tribute; and that, consequently, it left the constitutional rights of the Nabob over Tanjore unimpaired and entire: that Pertaub Sing dying in December 1763, his son Tulja-je, in consequence of the Nabob's promise to the father, was raised by Saned and investiture to the Putt of Tanjore, upon paying the usual fine of succession to his Lord: that the first act of his power was to assassinate all his legitimate male relations, making himself the last of his family: that he was as perfidious, and more aban-

done than his father, was guilty of every public breach of duty, allegiance, and faith: that the Directors of the East India Company were so much offended at his conduct, that they sent positive orders to their servants at Madras to assist the Nabob in bringing the said Tulja-je, his vassal, to a severe account, for his multiplied delinquencies: that those orders were not executed by the presidency of Fort Saint George, on account of the political state of the surrounding powers when the orders arrived, the Nabob himself being unwilling to drive matters to any extremity on the same account: that the Rajah, continuing a system of delinquency, presumed to take up arms against his neighbours and fellow vassals, the subjects and dependents of the Nabob: that the English Presidency, as well as the Nabob, when they remonstrated against the conduct of Tulja-je, were treated by him with inattention, insolence, and contempt: that the Nabob and the Presidency, were obliged, through necessity, to have recourse to arms: that their troops, in conjunction with the eldest son of the Nabob, attacked and besieged Tanjore, and, a breach being made, the Rajah agreed to terms equally dissatisfactory to the Nabob and to the Presidency: that the besiegers had scarce removed their troops from the sight of the Rajah, when he began, or rather renewed, his connection with Hyder and the Mahrattas, then the enemies of the Carnatic: that he continued his intrigues with the French, Dutch, and Danes: that he not only left unperformed the articles of his late agreement, but broke the treaty of 1762, by evading the payment of his tribute, the settlement of accounts, and the amount of the annual tribute, being the sole objects of that treaty: that while he refused to pay his just peishcush to his superior, he aided the enemies of that superior with money, provisions, and every species of assistance, to induce and enable them to invade the Carnatic: that the Presidency of Fort Saint George, urged by the necessity of preventing the dangerous efforts of the Rajah in the very heart of the Carnatic, again joined their forces with those of the Nabob, to chastise, and, should he prove obstinate, to reduce entirely this refractory and hostile vassal: that knowing the tenure of the Company in the country, and that they had no right to interfere but as guardians of the public safety, they solemnly declared that they only acted as auxiliaries in the ex-

pedition: that they stipulated the conquest, if any conquest should be made, should belong to, and be put in possession of, the Nabob, the principal in the war: that accordingly the expence of the expedition should be paid by him, as he only was to derive any benefit from the success which might follow: that the capital and the country should remain in his hands, in the double capacity of conqueror and Lord Paramount, for that as the Company did not appear as principals in the war, they had no claim to the rewards of victory: that under such stipulations, and many others of a similar kind, too tedious to mention, the united forces of the Nabob and the Company took Tanjore, the capital of the province of that name; that the Rajah, having alienated a part of the country to the Dutch, without the knowledge or consent of his liege Lord, the Presidency declared that their duty would not be fully performed, without placing the country, as well as the capital, in the hands of the Nabob: that the Nabob, to prevent the effusion of blood, and every pretence of a difference between the English and Dutch, agreed to pay to the latter the money which they had advanced to the Rajah, or pretended to have advanced, for the districts in their possession: that thus the province of Tanjore, independent of his right as superior, became the undoubted property of the Nabob, as the acknowledged and undeniable principal in a war, which terminated in conquest, the most indisputable and irreversible title that can be acquired by the law of nature and nations: that Tanjore, thus acquired, remained and flourished in the hands of the Nabob for more than two years: that the Company, swayed by motives different from any adherence to justice, or public faith, interfered with the most sacred rights of their superior in the Carnatic, and restored, as principals, a conquest, in the making of which they were paid as mercenaries: that, with innumerable aggravations of injustice, they took to themselves the very districts which the Nabob had redeemed, with a large sum, from the Dutch, and that so regardless were they of the smallest constitutional rights of the Lord paramount, that they took no care for the discharging of the small tribute stipulated by the treaty of 1762: that the flagrant breach of the public faith, made by the restoration of Tanjore, was followed by various and grievous encroachments on the remaining rights of the

Nabob : that he was stript of all dignity and authority among his subjects, by being denied the freedom of entertaining a few troops for enforcing the laws, and protecting his person : that, contrary to the privilege of a Prince and Sovereign, his family and servants have been wantonly insulted by the operation of the Company's law court within his territories, and even within his residence : that, contrary to the laws of nations, the Carnatic has been involved in war, without either the consent or participation of its Sovereign ; and that he was obliged to pay a very large portion of the expence : that although the province of Tanjore yields a great revenue, and ought to yield more, no proportion of the expences of the war was demanded of the Rajah : that, when peace was concluded in the Carnatic, the name of the Nabob, the Sovereign of the country, was not mentioned in the treaty ; while, to add to this severe indignity, the names of some of his vassals and dependants were inserted, and their interests included in that treaty : that although the war was not the Nabob's war, to manifest his attachment to the English interests, he agreed to assign his revenue towards maintaining it into the hands of the Company's servants, upon certain stipulations and conditions, and for a time limited : that as soon as the collection of the revenue came into the hands of the Company's servants, they seized the whole authority of the Nabob, who was thereby disgraced in the eyes of his subjects, and all the powers of India : that, although the Nabob was severely aggrieved by such invasion and oppression, the Company were not benefited by the measure, the country yielding much less under the new collectors, than it had done to the Nabob : that the Nabob and his family, and dependants, were reduced to want and distress by the smallness and irregularity of the payment of the portion allotted for his subsistence ; and that he languished for several years under the indignity and pressure of his misfortunes : that, when peace was established between the Crowns of Great Britain and France, his Sacred Majesty the King of Great Britain agreed to intercede with his ally the Nabob for the cession of additional territories to the French on the Coast : that, notwithstanding this implied intercession, considerable districts of the Carnatic were delivered to the French by the Presidency of Fort Saint George, without asking either the consent or ac-

quiescence of the Nabob : that orders were sent from England in 1784, which arrived in June 1785, to restore his country and revenue to the Nabob : that in these orders it was mentioned, that the Nabob should consent to pay annually twelve lacks of pagodas to his public and private creditors : that the Government of Fort Saint George demanded four lacks of pagodas more for the current expences, in all sixteen lacks of pagodas : that the Nabob complained of the burden of this sum, as too great for the ability of his country, fresh from the devastations of war : that he signified his wishes, as the public expence of defence must of necessity be defrayed, to have his annual payments of debts lessened, from which little inconvenience would arise, as it would be only extending the payment of a debt, for which interest would be regularly given, to a small portion of time beyond what was originally intended : that this would give ease to the distressed subjects of the Carnatic, and enable the Sovereign to restore the country to its former prosperity, by encouraging the cultivation : that orders, which must be allowed to be founded on the principles of equity, were sent to the Presidency of Fort Saint George, that the Company, in the proportion to the revenue on the Coast, should pay their share of the public expence : that, on this principle, the Nabob's proportion, under a wrong estimate of his revenue, was calculated at nine lacks of pagodas : that this sum, added to the twelve lacks paid to his public and private creditors, increased his annual kists to twenty-one lacks of pagodas : that his nett receipts, even in the very best years, and in the most prosperous times, seldom amounted to that sum : that they had fallen much below that amount, through the devastations of war, and a general and destructive drought : that the kists, stipulated to be paid to the Company, are far from being the whole of the expences of the Nabob : that to keep his country from absolute ruin, he must maintain public works, repair tanks and water courses, and give money to the poor ryots, to enable them to cultivate their lands : that he is bound, by every tie, to pay sums for charitable uses, to support his relations and their families, together with the old servants and dependants of himself and his father : that, besides, he is obliged to support some decent kind of dignity, as Prince of the country, and to maintain a numerous family of children : that

the fundamental laws, on which the rights of the Nabob of the Carnatic are founded, are deeply affected with respect to the jaghire and the district of Arni: that Zulphucar Cawn Bahauder, Nabob of the Carnatic, confirmed one Conary Row in that jaghire on the usual conditions: that the said Conary Row was to take care of, and to keep the fort in repair, to pay monthly the garrison, to send their receipts to the King's office as vouchers, to treat the soldiers with kindness, and to pay every attention to their rights, to engage their fidelity and attachment to the King: that the said Conary Row should pay a yearly peishcush into the King's treasury; and, in the event of a war in the Carnatic, to pay his share of the expences thereof, in proportion to the revenue of the jaghire, as settled by the Nabob of the King: "that, in case he should act contrary
" to those duties, he must look upon himself as dispossessed,
" and under the displeasure of the King:" that during the troubles, which infested the Carnatic for several years, the Killedar of Arni took advantage of the misfortunes of the times, by withdrawing his obedience: that he oppressed the people of the jaghire, being under no apprehension of control: that he attacked his neighbours and fellow-subjects, and gave protection to robbers, murderers, and all criminals who fled from justice: that he was guilty of all the crimes that constitute public delinquency, in the eyes of any regular government: that the Presidency of Fort Saint George concurred in opinion with the Nabob, as to the expediency of removing the Killedar: that he was accordingly deprived of his command, and the military stipend, arising from the jaghire, was taken away, but that he and his family were provided with an allowance for an honourable subsistence: that, notwithstanding the concurrence of the Presidency in depriving so dangerous a man of power, they restored to him the emoluments formerly allotted for the military service of the state: that the fort and its expence were left to the Nabob, and the whole revenue given to the Killedar and his friends: that an ample revenue, received without deduction, promoted disputes and dissensions among themselves: that the circles of trouble spreading to the neighbouring country, the servants of the Company, as well as the Nabob, were alarmed: that the Presidency accordingly gave their advice and concurrence to the Nabob in resuming the

jaghire: that the Nabob accordingly resumed it, and paid a monthly allowance to the Killedar and his family, till Hyder Ali, having ravaged Arni, with other parts of the Carnatic, in the year 1780, deprived it of all resources: that Arni, with the rest of the Carnatic, fell under the management of the servants of the Company by the deed of assignment: that when the rest of the Carnatic was restored to the Nabob, Arni was not restored: that such conduct is an unjustifiable interference with the independent rights of the Nabob: that, besides his loss of revenue, he is dishonoured, by the measure, in the eyes of India; as the nature of things, as well as the matter of fact, proves, that the Killedar could not possibly have been permitted to have any indefeasible right in a place within a few miles of the capital of the Carnatic: that on the 31st of January, 1787, Tulga-ge, Rajah of Tanjore, died, leaving none existing of the legitimate line of his family: that the Nabob, as Lord paramount of the country, made a requisition to the Company's Governments in India, to place Tanjore under his administration, according to the universal laws of the east: that the view of the Nabob's requisition was, not only the preservation of the undoubted and indisputable rights of his government and sovereignty, but to secure the peace of the Carnatic, which nature intended, and policy required, should be under one government: that, adding advantage to justice, the Nabob made proposals, which could not fail to render the affairs of the English nation, on the coast, prosperous: that the whole revenue of Tanjore is estimated, at present, at no more than ten lacks of pagodas; which may justly be ascribed to the loose, profligate, and oppressive government of the country, after it was unjustly wrested from the hands of the Nabob, in 1776: that the Company only received, out of that sum, four lacks of pagodas, for the general defence: that the Nabob proposed that the *whole revenue* of Tanjore (after defraying the charges of collection, and providing such a reasonable subsistence for the remains of Tulja-ge's family, as the Company's Government should think proper), should be appropriated, and set apart, for the military service of the Carnatic: that to render this offer more determinate and explicit, the Nabob engaged to realize, the first year eleven lacks; the second year thirteen lacks; and from the third year fifteen lacks

of pagodas annually, to be paid to the Company, and to be applied to the general expence: that this last-mentioned sum is one third more than the whole estimated revenue of the country at present; and near four times as much as the Company now receive from Tanjore, towards the public defence: that the Company's Governments acceding to the Nabob's proposals would perfectly secure the Carnatic from all foreign invasion: that the public finances would flourish, and the army be formidable: that the Company, instead of being almost destitute of commerce, as at present, might apply their whole revenue, amounting to near twenty lacks of pagodas, to the purposes of investment: that a subject of such importance will prove an excuse for repetitions, that the Nabob is the Sovereign and Lord Paramount of Tanjore, which was left without heirs, by the death of Tulja-je: that, by the laws of India, and those of all countries in the world where the feudal government exists, a territory left without heirs reverts to the Sovereign: that the East-India Company are no more than subjects in Hindostan: that in Bengal they are Dewans, but only Jaghirdars in the Carnatic: that neither as Dewans of Bengal, which country hath nothing to do with the Carnatic, nor as Jaghirdars on the coast, where their very tenure marks them as subjects, they have the smallest shadow of a title to interfere with the constitutional rights of their Lord Paramount: that, however, the constitutional rights of the Nabob, with respect to Tanjore, were overlooked or neglected: that the offers of an immense advantage to the Company and British nation were disregarded: that a natural son of the late Pertaub Sing, who had been more than twelve years a prisoner, was placed in the government of Tanjore: that neither a sanction of succession, nor an investiture were either asked from, or given by, the Nabob; without which no legal government can possibly exist in Tanjore: that thus the Nabob is grievously injured in his nearest, dearest, and most sacred rights: that the Company and British nation are much injured in point of finance: that an example of encroachment is exhibited to the eyes of all India; and a government established in one of its provinces, which, having its foundation on no right, cannot dispense justice, the great end of all government: that, when the treaty of February 1787 was negotiating between the Nabob and the Madras

Government, he represented to them, that the sums demanded from him were of such a vast magnitude as he was fully convinced his country was by no means able to bear ; and Governor Campbell, in consequence of the Nabob's representations, agreed, in a public letter, previous to the execution of the treaty, that an abatement of two lacks of pagodas per annum should be made in his kists, if the revenues were formed unequal to the payment : that the Company's servants have refused to allow him this annual abatement, though the Nabob offered to ~~submit~~ the accounts of his receipts to the inspection of such persons as the Governor and Council should think proper to appoint for that purpose : that by the said treaty of 1787 it was stipulated, that in the event of any failure in the kists from the want of rain, or other unforeseen calamities, a deduction should be made to the extent of the injury which the revenues might thereby sustain : that the Company's servants have also refused to conform to this stipulation, and to allow him any deduction in his kists on account of failure in his revenues from the want of rain, though it was well known to them that they had suffered in a very great degree from an unusual drought of four successive years, and their own jaghire had suffered greatly from the same cause, and for which they had granted remission to their own rentors : that by the same treaty it was agreed and stipulated, that the Nabob should be furnished annually with an accurate account, shewing the number of troops maintained, and the names and situations of the garrisons supported by the annual contributions, and particularly the troops and garrisons maintained by the nine lacks of pagodas annually contributed by his Highness to the general defence : that it is now upwards of three and a half years since the execution of that treaty, yet the Nabob has not been furnished with any account whatever, not even of the dividends made to his private creditors ; and though he is to pay nearly one half of the expences of the late war in the Carnatic, and the Company receive yearly about four lacks of pagodas under that head, yet they will not ascertain the *quantum* of those expences, or furnish him with any account to shew when his payments therein are to have an end : that, by the 15th article of the aforesaid treaty, it is also stipulated, that, whenever the Company shall enter into any negociations, wherein the interests of the Car-

natic and its dependencies may be concerned, the President in Council of Fort Saint George shall communicate the proceedings to his Highness the Nabob of the Carnatic, as the firm ally of the Company, and that he shall be informed of all measures which shall relate to the declaring of war, or making peace with any of the Princes of Hindostan, so far as the interests of the Carnatic may be immediately concerned therein ; and the name of his Highness shall be inserted in all treaties regarding the Carnatic : that great preparations for war were made for several months together, and negotiations entered into with the Nizam and the Mahratta States, and treaties finally made with those powers by the Company's Governments in India : that so far from conforming to that article of the treaty, the Nabob was not informed of any of the proceedings regarding those negotiations, until after they had been concluded, and the treaties executed, and even then no farther than being furnished with copies of the treaties with the Nizam and the Mahrattas, in which neither his name nor the Carnatic are so much as mentioned : that the army has been assembled, and hostilities have been commenced against Tip-poo, for several months past, without giving the Nabob any information relative to the operations of the war, though he is expected to pay nearly one half the expence thereof : that the grain of his country, in which the greatest part of his revenues consists, the ploughing cattle, and the husbandmen, were seized for the use of the army, whereby he was deprived of the means of realizing the actual resources of his country : that, after having taken these steps, the Company's Government at Madras drew up an incorrect and unjust account against the Nabob, by suppressing the reduction to be made on the new arrangement, and the allowance to be granted by treaty for failure of crops in bad seasons, whereby they made appear a large balance in favour of the Company, and, without so much as comparing it with the Nabob's statement, thus transmitted it to the Government General of Bengal, which was thereby erroneously led to order the sequestration of his country : that, in direct breach of the aforesaid treaty of 1787, and in defiance of the laws of nations, they carried the said orders of the Government General into the most rigorous execution, seized the Administration of his country by force of arms, committed

acts of barbarity towards many of his principal servants and subjects, men of family and distinction, throughout the countries, and, in the face of all the Princes and powers, and the European nations, in India, in the face of his enemies, and of his own subjects and dependants, have indelibly injured his honour, insulted his dignity, and reduced him to the mere shadow of the Prince of the Carnatic: that the Nabob has now been the most faithful and stedfast ally of the English nation, during a period of near fifty years: that he has gone hand in hand with them at all times of adversity as well as prosperity, and has devoted his whole life and fortune to their welfare: that, after all, instead of enjoying repose and tranquillity, which he had expected would have been the reward of his long and faithful attachment to the English nation, his latter days are embittered with aggravated misfortune and affliction, and his gray hairs treated with derision and contempt: that there are many other grievances under which the Nabob labours, but which the establishing a general line, that must not be transgressed, will remove: that, in setting forth the grievances he has explained, he has avoided to accuse or blame individuals: that redress is his object, and not revenge; and that, content with receiving justice for the future, he wants no retribution for past injuries: that he is willing to ascribe some public encroachments upon his rights to the Company's being ignorant of the limits of their own; and far be it from his heart to lay to the charge of a great nation, whom he esteems, admires, and loves, those enormities, encroachments, and oppressions, which passions of various kinds have suggested to individuals: that the Nabob of the Carnatic sends this his petition to the honourable the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, as the Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies, and their concerns, are peculiarly under their inspection and control; and therefore praying the House to take the premises into their consideration, and to do in them as to the House shall seem fit.

Ordered to lie on the table.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 6th March.

There not being a sufficient number of Members to ballot for a Committee on the Bedford Election, no business was done.

Wednesday, 7th March.

On the motion of Mr. Chancellor PITT, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration that part of His Majesty's speech, which recommends that a provision shall be made for the establishment of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York, the Earl of Mornington in the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the satisfaction that House had expressed, and the public had felt, as well as the approbation of His Majesty with respect to the happy event of the marriage of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, rendered it needless for him to trouble the Committee at length upon the subject now before them. He should be unpardonable if he expatiated on a topic so well known, and which had received such general concurrence. The subject now before the Committee was the consideration of a mode to enable His Majesty to make a suitable provision, as expressed in his gracious speech from the Throne, for their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York. The way in which he should propose that this should be accomplished, would be, that 18,000*l.* a year be allowed to their Royal Highnesses out of the consolidated fund. In addition to which it was in contemplation that a farther sum of 7,000*l.* a year should be allowed to their Royal Highnesses out of the Irish revenue. Lastly, he had to propose, what he hoped would be a distant contingency, if the event should ever happen—namely that of her Royal Highness surviving the Duke. In that case he should propose that the jointure of her Royal Highness should be 8,000*l.* a year, payable also out of the consolidated fund. That this annuity to their Royal Highnesses should be computed from the 5th of July, 1791. He therefore moved, “ That it is the opinion of the Committee, “ that a sum or sums of money not exceeding 18,000*l.* in the “ whole be annually charged on the consolidated fund, to enable His Majesty to make provision for the establishment of

“ their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Dukes of York, to be computed from the 5th of July 1791.”

Mr. FOX said, it was not his intention to move any amendment to the resolution now proposed: but he did think that the mode of providing for His Majesty's numerous family, should be put on some sure and solid principle, rationally considered and well digested. He declared, that what he was now going to say on this subject was the pure effect of his own opinion, totally unconnected with any partiality, which he might be allowed naturally to feel for any branch of this illustrious family. That it was not the effect of any previous consultation, or at the desire of any person whomsoever, but was the pure sentiment he had as a Member of that House, and even as an individual. Whatever attachment, therefore, he had of affection, and dutiful regard to any particular part of this illustrious family, was totally out of the question, in what he had to say on the present subject. He spoke of them as the Princes of this country, of whom he knew no more than of those who were Princes one hundred years ago. His opinion, therefore, with this explanation was, and he had no doubt but that the Committee would join with him, that it was the interest of the people of this country to be governed by a monarchy, and that such a monarchy should always be maintained with suitable dignity and splendor, for that a splendid support was requisite, and constituted a principle on which our Government was formed, and on which the constitution gave it power. This was the general ground on which he built his observations.

Another particular consideration which determined his opinion, and which he submitted to the Committee, was the particular situation of the Princes of the blood in this country, not only when provision was made for them from father to son, as was the case here, but when they should become of a more distant relation to the Crown. It must be allowed, that in either case they ought to have considerable power, and that they were placed in a hard state indeed, when they were to depend for support entirely at the will of the Crown, and be thus totally under its direction.

With respect to provision for the Princes of the blood, the first question, when application was made to Parliament, would naturally be—Is the civil list inadequate to the purposes of ful-

ly maintainig and supporting them ! He presumed it was not, or they should not hear of any motion of this kind. The House should make up their opinion on this point before they determined on measures of this nature. If the civil list was not adequate, and if the care and control of the maintenance of the Princes should be vested in His Majesty, then the civil list ought to be augmented and made adequate to that purpose. He thought that in this case some line ought to be drawn, and some solid principle adopted. The whole, as the case would now stand, would be entirely at the mercy of the Crown, whatever sums of money the Public might be called on to pay. The whole in this case, as proposed by the resolution before the Committee, was a mere annuity. Now, in what situation were the Princes placed ? A Prince arrives of age and marries ; he is to have an establishment for his family, for which purpose we gave him nothing but a mere annuity. He believed that the most narrow in their way of thinking, and the most rigid economists, would allow that a town residence was necessary for his Royal Highness, and that a splendid one, and that he should also have a splendid house in the country. What was the case here ? The Duke of York was to have a sum of money by way of annuity, and that was all. What was he to have for fitting up his dwelling ? What sum of money was he to set off with ? Parliament gave him a certain sum by way of income, and might say it was sufficient—True, but then they left him to provide the means of beginning life as he could. How was he to raise money for this purpose ? The only property he had by this resolution was an annuity, on which he would be compelled to raise money. Was this the proper way to make provision for a splendid Prince ? Those who thought they made in this way a suitable provision had not sufficiently reflected on the subject ; they had not thought how difficult it would be for His Royal Highness to raise money on this annuity. In order to do so, perhaps, he would be obliged to sell it at ten years purchase. What was the conclusion from all this ? Why, that the sum granted was not granted in the right way. A certain sum of money should be first granted to his Royal Highness to begin the world with, and afterwards some given to him by way of annuity. As it now stood, for aught Parliament could know, this annuity might be either too much or too little. He should

therefore wish that the House would lay down some principle by which, whenever they meant to provide for any of the Royal family, they might know in fact what sort of provision they really gave; here the House knew not what would be the real extent of the provision. His Royal Highness was put into a situation in which he knew not how to act. Suppose, for instance, in the fitting up of his town residence, a sum of 40,000*l.* were wanted, a sum considering all things, the splendour of his station, and the price of necessary articles, by no means out of bounds in point of expence, how was his Royal Highness to raise this money? By applying to persons who make a property of young men of fashion when they lend them money. This was fairly throwing his Royal Highness into the way of temptation—It was putting it out of his power to be discreet and economical—It was not what Parliament ought to do. They allowed of the propriety of the marriage of the Duke of York; the King approved of it—the Public were said to be satisfied with it. In these circumstances care should have been taken, that what was granted should be comfortably enjoyed—How could that be done? By allowing a certain sum for his Royal Highness to commence his establishment. This could be done without increasing the real expence to the Public—The annuity might be lessened, if the Committee thought fit, for the purpose of allowing his Royal Highness this sum of money; for his part he thought the income by no means too much. However unpopular the doctrine might be, he was ready to confess that he thought there should be a sum of money voted immediately, besides this annuity. Another point as to the marriage; supposing it to produce, what we call a security for the protestant succession—they would be left completely and totally without any provision whatever—they would be left totally dependant on the will of the Crown, or dependant on the will of Parliament. He did not approve of the practice which subjected these Princes to perpetual application to Parliament, without any thing like a principle to govern these applications. There should be provision for the issue of this family—Here they were placed in a worse situation than any private family in England. Either the immediate descendants from the Throne at least should be provided for by a resolution of that House, or by the civil list; and if the civil list was not equal to that end, it should

be made so. His Majesty had five sons, all of them now nearly of age—they had hitherto been provided for from the civil list. If the civil list was equal to their support, it was more than enough before that expence was incurred. All that he wished was, that the House should adopt some principle in that respect and not allow these things to remain for ever vague and indefinite. Hard, indeed, would the case be of those branches of the family, who were immediately descended from the Throne; they would not have even the same claim of natural affection to assistance from the civil list, and must wait the temper and caprice of Parliament. As to the case of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Dukes of York, it must be allowed to be totally uncertain. It depended not on their own prudence, but on the will of others. It was not an annuity on which money could be said to be sure of being raised, even after it was voted. Not a shilling of it was vested actually in his Royal Highness; it was not what he could convey. Money advanced on it would be only personal credit. Men of reputation would not like to deal on it—for it was a vote for money to enable His Majesty to provide a suitable establishment for their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Dukes of York—not a shilling of it actually under the controul of the Duke of York. These points struck him forcibly. Perhaps, he should be asked, why he did not move an amendment to this resolution. He had various reasons—he wished all these matters to originate with the Throne—he wished also that what came from thence in that respect, should be unanimously assented to in that House. He rather threw these observations out as hints of what he would wish to see hereafter. He hoped the time would soon arrive when some provision would be made for these things upon a sound and rational principle. That the Public might fairly see the amount of the expence they were to be at, on account of the whole family, and that when an annuity was given it should be correspondent with a splendid establishment: and that above all, that when provision was made for any of His Majesty's illustrious family, the splendour of their station should not be contrasted with the dependant state in which they were to ask for support. He should move nothing on the subject; he stated these things merely from his own opinion, upon a point on

which he thought the public mind was in some degree interested.

Mr. Chancellor PITT agreed with Mr. Fox on most of the topics he had advanced on this subject, and particularly, that points of this nature should originate from the Crown. He had it not in command however from His Majesty to make any other proposals than those already submitted to the Committee; and not having received any commands, it would be the height of presumption in him to make any of his own mind, and he believed the House seldom felt itself inclined to go beyond the point recommended by His Majesty in these cases; but there was one point on which he thought he ought to give his opinion, and which had been alluded to by the right honourable gentleman who had just spoken—"Whether the establishment in question would be defrayed out of the civil list, and whether the other branches of the Royal family should be provided for by Parliament?" This was evident from the tenour of a message which he had the honour of being charged with from the Throne last year, respecting the establishment of his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence. In that message His Majesty had stated the insufficiency of the civil list for the ends of providing for the younger branches of the Royal family. This was proof sufficient that the civil list was not adequate for this purpose. It was upon that ground that gentlemen voted twelve thousand pounds a year to his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence. He therefore took it for granted that the House allowed the inadequacy of the civil list for any establishment of the branches of the Royal family; and now he put it to the Committee, whether there can now remain a doubt on that point—or whether, if it was inadequate to the supporting of the Duke of Clarence with 12,000l. a year, whether 18,000l. could now be paid out of it for the Duke of York? The truth certainly was, the civil list is not more than adequate for the civil Government.

As to some of the other points alluded to by the honourable gentleman, he did not feel himself at liberty to discuss them now, having executed all the commands of His Majesty to their full extent, and not wishing to submit any thing more than he was commanded. It could not be desirable that the Royal family should always remain in a state that depended on that

House—but this was a point not immediately before them. One observation, however, had been made, to which he must make a short answer—That their Royal Highnesses had no capital allowed them by this proposed resolution. This was not strictly the fact; for the Committee would observe, that the annuity was to commence on the 5th of July last; this was half a year, being for both establishments above 12,000l.

When any of the branches of the family should be unprovided with establishments, and under a Sovereign not their father, no doubt they would then be more immediately the object of the care of that House, and provision, he hoped, would be made for them; but this also was a point not immediately pressing on the present Committee—it was not actually the business of the present day to make any provision in this respect, and he had it not in command from His Majesty to make any communication upon that topic. Commands, no doubt, would be given when it was necessary to make that provision. On the other points he should remain silent for the present, as they did not seem to be necessary for the present discussion.

Mr. FOX observed that the right honourable gentleman had taken credit for more liberality than had been shewn to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Dukes of York—six months would not be in advance to them for the purpose of commencing their establishment—they had arrived in England three out of these six months—if they had not, the advance would hardly be worth mentioning—but 12,500l—He submitted to the Committee whether they thought that a sum of money sufficient to commence the establishment of such a family. It was well known that the Duke had a country residence; but he hoped his Royal Highness would forgive him, if he observed, that it was possible that he may have had incumbrances on it, which were contracted under disadvantageous circumstances. He enforced some of his former observations, and added others on this subject, and remained quite of the same opinion as before.

Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE said, he thought it was right the son should depend upon the father for support. If he goes to usurers, and granted them annuities, he hoped the father would have the justice to set them aside. If he thought he should go to usurers, he would vote against his having any thing. As to the sum being too small, was this all he had?

Had he not the Bishopric of Osnaburgh ? Was that worth nothing ? As to his having no house in town, he hoped he would not be obliged to sleep in the streets !

Mr. FOX said, that it having been so totally unusual to consider any thing belonging to Princes out of this kingdom, that it had never even been mentioned. Not a word was ever said of His Majesty's revenue from Hanover ; it was never even thought of in the discussion of His Majesty's revenue, on his different applications to Parliament for support. If Hanover was never mentioned, why should Osnaburgh be mentioned as belonging to the Duke of York ? The House never yet inquired into these points ; if they should inquire, the result would be, that the subject was not worth the inquiry. Because we had no means of having either accurate or authentic information, the House should not inquire at all.

Mr. BURDON thought the sum proposed was more than the country could well afford, and more than absolutely necessary for his Royal Highness to expend. He therefore had no hesitation in saying that he should have considered 10,000*l.* a sufficient sum.

Mr. W. SMITH said, he had not the smallest doubt, that was the money to come out of the pockets of gentlemen in that House, there would not be a single voice against it, but he begged the Committee to recollect that it was the money of their constituents, and not their own, which they were voting away.

Mr. M. MONTAGU said it was of importance to consider, whether this was merely a provision for the Duke of York, or whether it was a principle upon which all the other branches of the Royal family might expect, under similar circumstances, the same allowance. If this principle was to be extended, he certainly disapproved of it ; because he thought with the right honourable gentleman over the way, that it was either not enough, or too much ; he owned his opinion leaned to the latter supposition, and he was sure the sum was more than the country could well afford. He likewise thought the Duke of York's income from Osnaburgh, made the impropriety of any increase here more against his claims, than those of any of the other Princes.

Mr. FOX said, it was extremely unfair in gentlemen to introduce the income arising from Osnaburgh into the debate

upon this subject, especially when every one who had mentioned it, had likewise declared that he knew not what it really was. In his opinion, that was entirely out of the question, as much so, as the income arising from Hanover to His Majesty; when the civil list was the subject in discussion, and both the one and the other he considered as very improper and unnecessary to be brought forward in that House.

Mr. Chancellor PITT agreed perfectly with what had fallen from the right honourable gentleman who spoke last, and had only to add, that he did not think that the present motion was any principle or precedent that could entitle the other branches of the Royal family to expect the same allowance; in his mind, it was necessary to take into consideration the degree of probability to the succession to the Crown, and the Duke of York having made a marriage, which the House and the country had approved of.

Sir WILLIAM DOLBEN expressed in very proper terms his loyalty to the King, and every branch of the Royal family; he wished likewise not to forget entirely his duty to his constituents. He should be pleased if the motion passed unanimously, that it might be well received in the country, so as not to meet that unpopularity which always attended a measure upon which there was much difference of opinion. He thought the sum was large, and if the other branches of the family were to have each as much, their allowance of 37,000*l.* per annum would be, comparatively speaking, much greater than the Prince of Wales's, which was only 60,000*l.* As to Osnaburgh, he did not think it ought to be put entirely out of the question; for he understood that his Royal Highness received upwards of 12,000*l.* per annum from it.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, he hoped the motion would pass without any opposition, and he did not think the sum in any respect too much; on the income which his Royal Highness derived from Osnaburgh, he thought it was wrong to argue upon what was so imperfectly known; as far as he could learn, however, it was not quite half what the honourable Baronet stated it to be.

Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE said, the income from Osnaburgh was a very material consideration; from the best information he could get, it produced 35,000*l.* per annum.

Mr. FOX said, he was sorry to be obliged to trouble the Committee so often. On the income which his Royal Highness received from Osnaburgh, he said nothing could be a stronger reason for putting it entirely out of the question than what had been stated by those very gentlemen who introduced it; they had clearly shewn how little they knew of the matter, one having stated it at 5,000*l.* another at 12,000*l.* and a third at 35,000*l.* per annum; and while such a difference as that between 5,000*l.* and 35,000*l.* existed in that House, he could not do them the injustice to think that those honourable gentlemen would wish the Committee to form any judgement on what was so vaguely stated. Independent of this, another circumstance weighed with him, and he was sure with the Committee, which must determine them not to say another word about Osnaburgh.—The House he knew, and the country he knew, was too proud to say that they would take from the subjects of Hanover, or the subjects of Osnaburgh, a paltry sum for the purpose of maintaining either the King of Great Britain, or any branch of his illustrious family. He did not pretend to know what His Majesty received as elector of Hanover, or the Duke of York as Bishop of Osnaburgh; indeed, he never had made it a subject of inquiry in that House; and, he trusted, it never would be made a subject of inquiry; whatever it was, he thought it but fair, that the greater part of it should be spent in those countries; nor would it be a pleasant reflection to this country or that House, to think, that in the moments of their greatest and boasted prosperity, they were obliged to call upon the peasants of Germany to assist them in providing an establishment for the Royal family of Great Britain. There was another point, upon which he wished that the House could be more fully informed than they really were, and that was, the unavoidable deductions that must be made from the allowances granted to the Princes; or in other words, the necessary expences of the establishments, which would, if known, clearly shew how little of the sum granted, they actually had it in their power to spend. He put this point very strongly, both with regard to the Prince of Wales and the other Princes; stating, that he believed there would not be found one man in that House so unaccommodating to the modes, and even fashions of

the times, as not to see the necessity of having ladies and gentlemen of high rank and character, in the situation of attendants upon those Royal personages, and the expence that followed such establishments. He never had been one who wished to take from the splendor of monarchy; and while monarchy was very properly the favourite system of our constitution, it was impossible to contend for that equality among all ranks, which prevails in a simple republic. With regard to the principle, he wished it might be a principle to provide as liberally for the other branches of the Royal family, when in similar situations with the Duke of York; to those who thought otherwise, he asked, if they were sorry for the flourishing increase of His Majesty's family and the Brunswick line, or if they regretted that so many of them arrived at years of maturity; certainly if this was the case, they acted most hypocritically, for scarce a year had passed that they had not carried up the most fervent congratulatory addresses to the Throne upon the birth of another Prince or Princess. As the Prince of Wales's name had been mentioned, he would just say a few words respecting his income, which he contended was proportionably much less than any of the younger branches of the family, and much less than that of former Princes of Wales, and perfectly inadequate to the expences of his establishment. He said, that George, Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Second, had 100,000*l.* per annum, and Frederick, Prince of Wales, had likewise for some part of his life 100,000*l.* and that he had not always so was a circumstance of regret, and occasioned consequences that would reflect honour on no part of the country or Government; he added that the Prince of Wales was the only part of the family that had received no increase to his income; the privy purse in the mean time had been increased from 6 to 60,000*l.* and the civil list from 600,000*l.* to 900,000*l.*

Mr. J. T. STANLEY requested the House would consider how strongly the country called for economy in the distribution of public money. A right honourable gentleman had said, the English nation should be generous: it certainly should; but its representatives should not act without caution, in consequence of this disposition; and circumstances ought to temper the wish, that naturally must have arisen in the mind of

every individual in the House, of being liberal, even to an extreme, on an occasion like the present.

Liberal he did think they would be, however, though so large a sum as that proposed should not be given, it should be considered what a considerable income a grant of 10,000*l.* a year only, instead of 18,000*l.*, would make, when added to 12,000*l.* per annum, already allowed to the Duke, and to what it was probable would be granted to him by the Parliament of Ireland; and the revenue received from Osnaburgh, Mr. Stanley said, he did not think should be left out of the consideration. We had no right, it was true, he observed, to demand an account to be laid on the table of such sums as were annually received from thence; but surely it was not unreasonable in the House to have expected, that some information on the subject would have been given to it, either by His Majesty or his Royal Highness, when a request was made that we should enable the Prince to live with a splendor suited to his rank.

Certain it was, that the Public was in a great degree interested to know what would be the conduct of Parliament on this occasion. Mr. Stanley said, he had conversed with no one, who had not thought 18,000*l.* per annum, every circumstance considered, too large a sum to be granted. If there was to be a division, his vote would be directed by what he knew of public opinion; it had seemed to him so decided. He approved, therefore, very much of the amendment which had been moved.

Mr. Chancellor PITT with respect to Osnaburgh had nothing to add to what had been stated by the right honourable gentleman with so much propriety, farther than that he owned himself no ways better informed as to the exact amount of the income derived from it than any other Member.

Sir WILLIAM DOLBEN, in explanation said, he rose to wipe away a slur thrown on him by the right honourable gentleman, rather unintentionally he believed, and he was willing to impute it to the right honourable gentleman having been kindled, as he went along, into the warmth and ardour of debate. The right honourable gentleman had asked, if they were sorry that the King had such a family? Most undoubtedly he was not. He loved and honoured them all, but in making a

provision for one of them, they ought not to forget what was due to the others. The Duke of York, in his mind, was not a jot nearer to splendour than his younger brother, and therefore a distinction, that might hereafter appear to be invidious, ought not to be set up. It was the duty of that House, in all matters of expence, to look to the pounds, shillings, and pence; in all matters of account, and on other occasions, the right honourable gentleman was keen enough to observe upon such subjects with as much shrewdness as any man whatever.

Mr. BOUVERIE contended, that whatever was the agreed-on income of the Duke of York, the House ought to be assured, that it would come free into his Royal Highness's disposal. Mr. Bouverie spoke of the comparative income of the Duke of York, and Prince of Wales, as by no means proportionate to their different ranks; thirty-seven thousand a year being a very large proportion, compared with sixty-two thousand a year for the Prince.

Mr. Chancellor PITT rose to say two or three words in observation on Mr. Bouverie's remarks, who had compared the present establishment of the Duke of York, who was married, with the establishment of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who was unmarried; whereas on that account alone all comparison must fall to the ground. Mr. Pitt said, with regard to the revenue of the Electorate of Hanover, or the Bishopric of Osnaburgh, when gentlemen wanted some account to ascertain it, he begged to ask them how they could get at any such account? How were they to order it, and what British officer had any cognizance of the affairs of Hanover or of Osnaburgh, or where was the office to which an order of the House for the purpose could be transmitted? With respect to the proposition brought forward on the subject of a provision for the establishment of the Duke of York, it contained the whole of His Majesty's demand for his Royal Highness, and therefore he had no right to trouble the House with any thing farther on the subject.

Mr. DRAKE replied to an expression of Sir William Dolben, and said, it was by taking care of the pence that they would best serve their constituents, as the pounds took care of themselves.

Mr. MARTIN apologized for having entered the House at so late an hour, declaring; he had been for five hours in the forenoon employed on a Committee above stairs. He desired that the motion might be read, which having been complied with, Mr. Martin said he thought the Duke, having made a match every way so desirable and satisfactory to the country, ought to be amply provided for.

Mr. W. SMITH said, he rose again merely to state, that he understood no subjects in Germany were so free as those of Hanover and Osnaburgh, and that he did not wish that a single penny should be drawn from either place, for the support of any part of the Royal family of England.

Mr. BRANDLING thought if the House attempted to avail itself of the income of the Bishop of Osnaburgh, it would act unjustifiably; it ought, in his mind, to give his Royal Highness an ample provision, independent of that accidental circumstance.

The question was at length put and carried.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then moved a resolution relative to the 8000l. a year as a settlement.

“ That eight thousand pounds per annum be granted to her Royal Highness the Duchess of York, should she survive his Royal Highness, to be defrayed and paid out of the consolidated fund.”

Mr. FOX shortly observed, that 8000l. a year compared with her immediate settlement of 4000l. a year, which he understood to be destined for what was called “ her Royal Highness's pin money,” might hereafter prove a disproportionate provision, in case her Royal Highness should be left a widow with a family requiring a larger establishment.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that it was thought right to comply with the stipulated terms of the treaty of marriage that had been formally concluded with the King of Prussia, her Royal Highness's father, but that doing so, would not preclude any future provision, allowing for the contingent event that her Royal Highness should survive the Duke her husband; which the Court of Prussia was, he understood, perfectly willing to leave to the generosity of the King and country, as the situation of her Royal Highness might hereafter change and render necessary.

Mr. FOX professed himself to be perfectly satisfied with Mr. Chancellor Pitt's explanation.

Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE hoped the eight thousand pounds would be clear, and without deduction for fees. He wished as a mark of respect to have the words, "Clear of all fees," inserted.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, such words were unnecessary, all grants to the Royal Family were without deduction of taxes.

The question was then put and carried.

Major SCOTT said, that as he understood his motion would not be opposed by either side of the House, it would be unnecessary for him to use arguments in support of what met the general sense of the Members present; he would merely mention the circumstances that had made an impression on his own mind, and had induced him to bring the subject forward for their consideration. The House had now voted above fifty-one thousand eight hundred pounds for the trial of Mr. Hastings, on account only. In the first year of this trial a full and particular account of every disbursement made by the Solicitors was laid before the House to the twenty-fourth day of the trial. There was also upon the table, the correspondence between the commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury and the Managers, on the subject of the expences of the trial; from this correspondence it appeared that the expences to the eleventh day of the trial amounted to 3495*l.* a sum which seemed so high, that the Lords of the Treasury thought it their duty to tell the Managers what a heavy charge might be incurred by the Public, on account of the impeachment. In reply, the Managers observed, that this expence of 3495*l.* was not incurred by eleven days of the trial, but that a considerable part of it had been employed in services performed before the trial had commenced, in preparing the articles of impeachment, and in arranging and applying the evidence, relative not only to the charges in which they had proceeded, but in most of those which had not then been opened. The fair conclusion from this statement was, that the future expences of the trial would be considerably less than in the first eleven days, yet the fact was, the Major said, that they had been so considerably higher, as to leave the subject absolutely incomprehensible. Every gentleman knew that the first year of the trial was the year of the heaviest apparent expence,

at least it was the year in which more was done than in the following three years of the prosecution ; by this statement he did not mean positively to lay blame any where, but it was an ample justification to him, to move for that sort of particular account from the 15th of May, 1788, to this day, which was already upon the table up to that day, from the first employment of Counsel and Solicitors—and in the account before the House, the services performed, and the money paid to Counsel, &c. was very fully stated ; all he wanted was a continuation of the same account. The motion was seconded and carried immediately.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 8th March.

Lord MORNINGTON brought up the report of the Committee to consider of an allowance for the establishment of the Duke and Dukes of York.

The resolutions for allowing their Royal Highnesses the annual sum of eighteen thousand pounds, and of allowing the Duchess a jointure of eight thousand pounds a year, in case she shall survive the Duke, being read,

Mr. BAKER observed, that some years ago His Majesty had been enabled, by a vote of that House, to charge the consolidated fund with the sum of sixty thousand pounds, for the support of the younger branches of the Royal family. He observed, that after this vote, His Majesty would not be at liberty to appropriate any part of that sixty thousand pounds for the Duke of York.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, certainly not, but he did not think it delicate to make that a part of these resolutions.

The resolutions were then read and agreed to.

Mr. PELHAM said, he had a petition on behalf of a great number of hop-owners and hop-planters, stating grievances under which they laboured, from some lay impropiators of tythes. They had no hostility against the Church or its revenue, but wished the House to take the subject into consideration, and to form some regulation. He said, he should not now move any thing on this petition. Some future day that should be brought

forward—he only moved now that the petition should be brought up.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he had no objection that the petition should be brought up; but that the subject itself was of considerable importance, and no resolutions on it should be agreed to without great deliberation. He had had conferences with various owners and planters of hops from different parts of the kingdom. They all agreed that some regulation was highly necessary.

The petition was then brought up, and ordered to be laid on the table.

Two other petitions from other persons were presented for the same object.

Major MAITLAND gave notice that his motion, which stood now for Wednesday, would be made on Thursday next.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee on the income and expenditure of the national debt, and the House having resolved itself into a Committee accordingly, Lord Mornington in the chair,

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that having given notice, that on the present day, he should submit to a Committee his propositions for a new bill, for accelerating the payment of the national debt, and conceiving that the principle upon which his resolutions were founded, was likely to be adopted, he would not trouble the Committee farther than by merely stating the resolutions he should move; as it might be more agreeable and convenient to discuss them when a bill founded thereon should be before the House. Mr. Chancellor Pitt concluded by reading two resolutions, the first of which went to continue the effect of the sinking fund for the reduction of the national debt, subsequent to the period when the interest of the money in the sinking fund should amount to four millions annually; and the second, to prevent any future permanent burdens on the country, by enacting, that a provision should be made for the speedy payment of every loan entered into, or that an additional sum, in proportion to the loan so borrowed, should be set apart for the reduction of the whole national debt.

The question being put on each resolution, they were agreed to, and the House resumed.

Mr. FOX said, he had a petition complaining of acts passed in the 9th and 10th of the reign of King William, some clauses in which subjected certain persons to the most cruel penalties on account of their religious sentiments. “Where any person shall deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, in speech or in writing, he shall, for the first offence, be declared incapable of enjoying any office whatever under Government, or otherwise, by which any emolument may be derived. For the second offence he shall, in addition to the other penalty, be unable to sue, in any court of law or equity, for any claim whatever—or be guardian to any infant—or receive any legacy—and shall also suffer imprisonment for three years.” Such were the intolerable hardships to which men were exposed for publishing their religious opinions. Under a sense of this injustice, about sixteen hundred persons had signed this petition. They were chiefly of a class who are denominated Unitarians, but among them were various sects of Dissenters, and many Members of the Church of England.—The object was general toleration, and for this they applied to Parliament. The petitioners might soon be made more numerous if that were necessary; but he was of opinion there was no such necessity. He therefore moved, “That this petition be brought up,” which was granted.

The petition being read, and ordered to be laid on the table,

Mr. FOX said, he had nothing farther to move at present. The only object he had now in view, and indeed the whole, he wished to be considered merely as notice—“That at some future day he should have a proposition to move in that House”; upon the principle and the general outline of the subject, he entertained no doubt whatever. The only thing that introduced a difficulty, was in the manner in which he should take up the subject—ever since he thought his faculties capable of thinking on the subject, the whole code of penal statutes in support of any doctrine in religion, appeared to him to be founded on an error in principle—that such laws never did produce—never could produce, any benefit whatever to mankind; but were, on the contrary, replete with injustice and oppression. No doubt therefore could be entertained by him but that it was proper to repeal them. He was led by these reflections to state something of the mode which he should adopt upon

this occasion. He freely confessed that he had in view the repeal of every penal statute upon religion that exists.—For this purpose he should move, on some future day, “ That the whole House do resolve itself into a Committee, in which he should propose that leave be given to bring in a bill for the total repeal of all these penal statutes”—then different gentlemen would have a fair opportunity of delivering each his opinion on the whole penal code—to say whether any—if any, what part of them ought to remain. In his opinion they were all disgraceful to our statute book ; but if he should not be able to gain the whole, he would take what part he could, of his object ; rather than have nothing, he would take the simple prayer of the present petition—the mere repeal of the acts recited—but this was only a slender part of his present object.

The House adjourned.

Friday, 9th March.

Mr. WILBERFORCE gave notice, that on Thursday the 29th of March he should make his motion respecting the abolition of the slave trade. He added that he thought it adviseable publicly to declare, that he neither now designed, nor at any time past had entertained an idea of bringing forward any proposition concerning the emancipation of the negroes actually in the islands—a declaration he should have deemed altogether unnecessary, if he had not lately found reason to believe that the views of himself and other friends to the abolition, were even still misrepresented on this point. For himself, therefore, and for those who acted with him, he disclaimed the intention which, for obvious reasons, had been with so much industry ascribed to him.

Colonel TARLETON said, he was glad the honourable gentleman had mentioned so early a day for the discussion of this subject—a discussion which he hoped would give security to all the trade, and would be the means of sending a great deal of paper to oblivion (alluding, we suppose, to the numerous petitions, and the mass of evidence on this subject presented to the House.) He hoped that the majority of that House on that day would teach Mr. Wilberforce to abandon a project so injurious to our important commerce, and to employ his talents in

future in some pursuit less destructive to the interest of this country. He then moved, that the House be called over on the day preceding this discussion, which will be Wednesday the 28th of March.

Mr. W. SMITH said, that he begged leave to second the motion of the honourable gentleman (Colonel Tarleton) and that he did it with the greater pleasure, because he expected a totally different issue of the business from that on which the honourable gentleman seemed so confidently to rely. He had no doubt but that gentlemen would arrive from the country, deeply impressed with the sentiments which had made so great a progress in the nation at large, and would be zealous in supporting a motion, in favour of which such numbers of their constituents had already expressed so warm and decided an opinion; nor could he conceive the possibility in any case, that those numerous petitions, with which the table was already loaded, and the yet far greater number with which he had every reason to expect it would be covered before the question should be brought forward, could be "consigned to oblivion," or indeed could fail of obtaining that great object which was their general payer. Mr. Smith said, that he was farther happy in the prospect of discussing the business in a full House, as it would afford an opportunity of entirely dissipating whatever apprehensions might have been raised by those efforts which had been so industriously circulated of a connection between the agitation of this question and the insurrection in St. Domingo. The calamities of which unhappy island he believed were deplored far more sincerely by himself and his friends, than by many of those very persons who had been so active in spreading the false alarms to which he had alluded; for that they were entirely false and groundless, and that the measures which had been taken here for the abolition of the slave trade, had not had the minutest relation to those disorders, he was convinced might be proved to the entire satisfaction of every reasonable and impartial mind.

Mr. WILBERFORCE rose again, and observed, that as the House was proceeding to other business, he would not detain them by entering into any debate; but he could not help making a single remark on what had fallen from the honourable gentleman opposite to him (Colonel Tarleton) respecting the

oblivion to which he hoped the petitions would be consigned. For his own part, he could by no means think it possible that the sense of the people, expressed more generally and more loudly than in almost any former instance, would fail to have its due weight on the present occasion; but he would fairly confess, that if the honourable gentleman's expectations should be realized, and his own motion be negatived by a larger majority than before, he should then indeed concur with him in wishing that the petitions might be consigned to oblivion; because so long as they should continue in remembrance, they would continue a reproach to the character of Parliament, and add to the disgrace which could not but tarnish the honour of a British House of Commons, while this detestable traffic in men should be suffered to exist.

Mr. CAWTHORNE expressed a wish that the call might be enforced with the utmost strictness, observing, that last year, though a call of the House had been moved, it had been suffered to pass over without its having been put in effect. He moved, "That the Speaker do write letters to the Sheriffs of
" the several counties, to give due notice to the Members re-
" specting boroughs within the said counties, that they must
" attend their duty in Parliament on the 28th instant, or be
" subject to the consequences."

Mr. Cawthorne's motion was negatived.

Mr. WILBERFORCE then moved, "That the House do
" resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, on
" Tuesday, the 29th of March inst. to consider of the circum-
" stances of the African slave trade."

He then moved, "That all the petitions presented on this
" subject should be referred to the same Committee."

Ordered.

Mr. THOMPSON said, it was with great concern he had to observe, that in consequence of the absence of several gentlemen of great talents and respectability from the House this day, from the nature and importance of the subject, and the part he intended to take in its discussion, he was under the necessity of declining to enter into it to-day, but would on Tuesday next bring forward a motion with regard to the trial of George Rose.

Mr. ROSE said, that seven or eight days ago he learned, for he was not in the House at the time, that the honourable gentleman had given notice of moving something with respect to him. He could not have failed to express his approbation of an inquiry being made into any circumstance that the House should think fit to be brought before them with respect to him. It was not only what he approved of, but also his cordial wish that such inquiry should take place; he should be glad to take the earliest opportunity for that purpose. He had been misrepresented in the case to which he supposed the honourable gentleman alluded, and he wished the honourable Member to explain himself without delay. He must express his astonishment at the circumstance as it now stood. The honourable gentleman, seven or eight days ago, was pleased to allude to the trial of George Rose, and said he had something to move on it, and then, on the very day which he fixed on for that purpose, instead of going into the subject, according to his notice, he shrunk from the investigation. Having given this notice, it was incumbent upon him to proceed, unless he could assign some reason, and if he had any, it was incumbent on him to state that reason why he did not now bring the subject forward. He had said, indeed, that many respectable gentlemen were absent, who might take part in the discussion. Although it was always desirable, yet it was not always indispensably necessary, that the gentlemen alluded to should take part in the discussion of a subject. Besides, as no reason was stated for their absence, he thought it was fair to conclude they had no wish to attend the discussion of the subject. He put it to the candor of the House, whether the honourable gentleman should not now proceed, or that if he should not, whether he had not been guilty of deceiving the House, by calling its attention to what he did not mean to bring forward.

Mr. COURTENAY rose to express his astonishment at the complaint of the honourable gentleman who spoke last—that a gentleman postponed a motion: was there any thing new in it—was it not done every day—was this not the very first time it was complained of—had not the Chancellor of the Exchequer repeatedly done it—was there any dispute about the propriety of it? He was glad, however, that the honourable

gentleman was willing that this discussion should take place.—He hoped he would not object, therefore, to a Committee of Inquiry. He made use of bold language—Trial of George Rose! Aye, Trial of George Rose, and a serious one it might be; however, the honourable gentleman, no doubt, rested secure in conscious innocence and defied inquiry, at least it should seem so from the smile on his countenance. Mr. Courtenay wished for this discussion also—he thought he could advance many things in his favour!

Mr. LAMBTON vindicated Mr. Thompson from the charge of trifling with the House, and said, he knew that many important facts were to be disclosed in the discussion of this subject.

Mr. GREY observed, it was not unusual for a Member of that House, to give notice of an intention to bring forward a subject, and afterwards to defer it. That was done almost daily, and often without assigning a reason. But here there was a reason, namely, the absence of several gentlemen, who might wish to deliver their sentiments in the course of the discussion. As to the insinuation that there was no earnestness in this subject, he must beg leave to inform the House that there was earnestness; that many Members, who were not now present, intended to speak on this subject. He had a good deal himself to submit to the House upon the general practice, and some extraordinary circumstances which had taken place in the Westminster election.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, it was not very pleasant for the Members of the House to come down with a view of hearing a particular subject discussed, and afterwards be obliged to separate without hearing that discussion; but if the honourable Member did not chuse to go on, the House had no power to go on. It was true, he ought to assign some reason why he did not proceed, but that rested with himself. However, if the House must part in this disappointed state, he recommended them to part in good humour. If the honourable gentleman did not chuse to assign any reason, the House had not any power to make him speak; he was here, and could do as he pleased; like a horse that was brought to the water, nobody could compel him to drink.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL doubted whether the manner in which the notice of the motion was worded was sufficiently decorous and respectable to an honourable Member of that House, or was consonant to the dignity of the House itself.

Mr. MITFORD entertained sentiments similar to those of the last honourable and learned gentleman, and expressed a fear that the House was insulted by this delay.

Mr. GREY observed, that evidence of an important nature had been lately discovered, which it was necessary to arrange, and to consider, and therefore it was necessary that the subject should be postponed. With respect to the advice of the right honourable gentleman, for the House to part in good humour, he had no objection to adopt it; but if there were any sign of moroseness, he begged the House to reflect to whom it was imputable—Who talked of shrinking from the subject?

Mr. THOMPSON then said, “ On Tuesday next I shall make a motion relative to the practice of gentlemen high in office, respecting the Westminster election.”

Mr. LAMBTON assured the House, there was nothing insolent or trifling intended in this business, but that it was to be a serious charge.

Mr. RYDER expressed himself dissatisfied with this proposed delay.

Mr. TAYLOR assured the House also, that he knew his honourable friend Mr. Thompson much too well to suppose that he would shrink from this subject. He observed there were practices in the Westminster, and other elections, that ought to be seriously investigated in that House.

Mr. FOX, absent all this while, just now entered the House, he said, the reason why a great number of gentlemen were absent, was, that it being a ballot day, they were told, about five o'clock, that nothing like the number of one hundred Members were present, and that consequently there would be no House. This in point of fact was his own case, or he should not have been absent from his duty. When he heard afterwards that the first account was false, and that there was a House, he made all the haste he could to come down, but he doubted whether other gentlemen would be undeceived in

that particular to-night, till it would be too late for their attendance.

Mr. DUNDAS made an observation or two on the variety of reasons assigned for not proceeding in this business to-night.

Mr. FOX said, that he did not flatter himself so much as to imagine the House would think it worth while to hear of him why he was absent. As to the observation made on the variety of reasons given for the proposed delay, he could only say he did not see that any of them were weakened by another being added to the number.

The notice was then observed by the SPEAKER to stand for Tuesday.

The House adjourned.

Monday, 12th March.

General BURGOYNE said, that when he first stirred the subject he was now about to bring before the House at full, he had declared his object to be redress, and not accusation. He would begin by repeating that declaration. Not only the satisfaction of his own mind, but the success of his motion, depended upon conciliating the temper of every office, every set of men, every individual, that could be implicated in his intended inquiry. He must state grievances; but he would admit, in every possible case, every plea that could be urged for removing the causes of those grievances from persons to errors in the institution, or rules under which they acted. For the more clear view of the subject, the House would advert to what had already passed upon it. At the time he gave his warm assent and praise to the bounty of bread-money, bestowed upon the private soldier, he took occasion to lament that the situation of the subaltern of infantry had not likewise been taken into consideration. His stipend, barely adequate to his situation at its first allotment, was rendered so much worse by the increase of price in every article of life, that it was impossible for a gentleman to subsist upon it: this distress had become more grievous of late years, by a practice of withholding the arrears of these poor officers, under colour that the accounts of their respective regiments were not settled. The withholding the arrears of any officer under that colour, was unwarrant-

able; but it was particularly oppressive upon the subalterns, who could not possibly be implicated in any accounts, except when individually employed upon the recruiting service; an account purely regimental, easily and shortly settled, and for which, in case of misconduct, the parties were responsible in their commissions. To this the Secretary at War had then replied, "That the General was mistaken; that the subalterns always *had* received them, and always *might* receive them, upon proper application, though the general accounts of the regiment were not settled." The Secretary at War had since laid upon the table, a letter from the War Office to the Pay Office, written in 1785, proving that an issue of arrears, to the end of the year 1783, had been made to the subalterns of a great number of corps, viz. to all the corps *reduced in the said year 1783*; and it appeared by other papers produced by the honourable Secretary, that the subalterns of standing corps had occasionally been paid arrears, when those of the Captains and Field Officers had been withheld, because the general accounts were not settled. The General said, he very readily acknowledged these mistakes in regard to the extent of the grievance upon subalterns. He could not repent his errors, for two reasons; the one, that they had brought forth instances that did credit to the honourable Secretary; the other, that they had produced a public, official, positive declaration in that House, "that the arrears of subalterns, up to a given time, (viz. a year or eighteen months) might always be obtained, though the general accounts should not be settled, by proper application of the agent, in the Colonel's name, to the War Office." The General appealed to the officers Members of that House, to the whole army, to every agent in England, whether that rule was ever understood, or believed to exist, before the honourable Secretary, to his honour, and to the happiness of the lower ranks of the army, had declared it upon this occasion.

Having made these concessions relative to the subalterns, (which naturally were the first in his contemplation, as men the least able to bear a protraction of payment) the General said he was far from conceding that the substance of the grievance the army at large had to complain of, was not worthy an inquiry of the nature he intended to move. He would not

rest upon the complaint that even to the regiments whose accounts were unembarrassed, four years arrears were unpaid at Christmas last; three years only he acknowledged could be called due; because one year was in strict regularity kept back in conformity to the original institution. But that this complaint of three years was prevalent could not be denied; and he would ask the honourable Secretary, whether a decent and proper memorial had not lately been received from Gibraltar upon the subject? But this delay was trivial, in comparison of what he had to alledge: he had no doubt of its being proved, if the inquiry were granted, that there were very many corps, whose clearances, as far as related to Field Officers and Captains, had been suspended seven, eight, and nine years; among these nearly all the corps reduced in 1783. There were officers in the House; one in particular he could call upon, but did not see him in his place who would vouch that fact. It might now be proper to state the apparent causes of these delays. There were two subordinate offices under the War Office, for examining regimental accounts: one chiefly under the direction of Colonel Delancy, a gentleman perfectly qualified for that situation, and of a character highly respectable in every point of view. The object of his office, (as the General believed) was to examine the accounts of regiments, from the year 1775 to the year 1783—the period of the American war, in which the greater part of the British infantry had been at different times employed; and from the nature of the service, the accounts had become complicated and intricate. The other office was under the charge of Mr. Taylor, and the business of it was to examine accounts from 1783 downwards. Upon report from Mr. Taylor to the Secretary at War, of balances being struck, debenture warrants were issued to the Pay Office to discharge such balances. The General was aware, that a clause in the Pay-Office act might be pleaded for this mode of proceeding; but the admirable author of that act (Mr. Burke) a man whose philanthropy is ever in unison with his talents, little thought that the provisions which he framed for the purpose of facilitating and expediting payments of the army (and to speak of the act in general, it is one of great and solid benefit to the service) should be used to a direct contrary effect, perhaps by too rigorous a construction; perhaps by grafting upon the

act rules too precise to be practicable ; perhaps by a necessary operation, but one that could not be foreseen ; perhaps from causes with which the act had nothing to do ; the fact was that the examination of accounts was dilatory in all cases, and in many, he was willing to believe unintentionally, but from the nature of the regulations adopted by office, in many cases oppressive. In the first place, as he was informed, the examinations were *ex parte*: respites and disallowances were struck without a power of explanation or appeal. The consequence (as the General was informed) had frequently been, that the agents, in the name of their respective regiments, had refused to receive the balances under the respites and disallowances made by office. And where was that disputed money ?—It remained with Government ; and there it must remain to eternity, if the mode of adjusting accounts now pursued was not corrected. The General trusted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of whose rectitude, in regard to public money, he had the highest opinion, would stand forth in support of a measure, that had for its object justice to the army, justice to the public, and justice and credit to office. But it had been maintained that Captains were public accountants, and therefore it was justifiable to withhold arrears, or to charge against them respites and disallowances made in the general accounts. The General positively denied that any officer could be denominated a public accountant, except the Colonel ; and he went into several details in support of his opinion ; but he added, that if Captains were to be public accountants, it was the strongest argument that could be used for passing some law more forcible than any now existing, for expediting the settlement of accounts. After a service of between forty and fifty years, the General thought he might be allowed some knowledge in the character of British officers ; professions have a general character. He had ever found British officers prodigal of life, when duty called for it ; and if not prodigal of private fortune, disinterested often to a fault. Try them for any number of years in war or peace, he would venture to assert, that for one instance that could be produced of a British officer being guilty of a dirty pecuniary transaction, he would shew a thousand instances of patrimony devoted to the credit and dignity of the profession. It was far from him to insinuate that

proper examination ought not to have place in every department of public expenditure ; he only ventured to contend, that of all the channels where public money might run, the army, as far as regarded the officers, was one, where *severity of account* was least required.

Now, whether the present mode of examination was, or was not, severe in the extreme, was the great object of the inquiry he proposed. He need not go farther in complaint of severity, than what he had already stated—examination *ex parte*, and decision without appeal : he would only add, that some of the rules under which the examiner acted, were framed in a manner that to comply with them was impossible. For instance, if his information was true, the want of muster-rolls was given as a reason for not settling the accounts of regiments, whose service had laid in parts of the world where there were no commissaries of musters. In other cases, disallowances were struck, upon rules that could not, from the remoteness of situation, be known to the regiments who incurred the penalties : in other cases, money was charged by retrospect of several years against regiments, in which perhaps two-thirds of the officers had been changed, or those who were faulty, if faults there were, were dead, or not forthcoming.

In other cases, regiments were disallowed expences incurred, and bona fide paid, by positive orders of Commanders in Chief. There were several undeniable facts of this kind ; and when they were demonstrated, and put home to Office, what was the answer ?——“ It may be so ; but we are bound by rule, and “ this is not the place for redress.” The General wished to bear full testimony to the urbanity and general attention with which the Secretary at War treated officers with whom he conversed ; he would bear the same testimony to the Deputy Secretary ; nor did he mean to accuse Mr. Taylor, of whose manners he heard favourable mention, of wilful disrespect to the profession ; but the fact was, that from the nature of Mr. Taylor’s office, few officers went from it without feeling themselves humiliated or provoked. Men who had fought and bled for their country would feel acutely : their old wounds ached at a harsh or pert rebuke from a clerk ; the sense of the heart, so pathetically expressed by our great poet, when he

enumerates the evils that make men weary of existence, was awake in them :

“ Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,

“ The insolence of office, and the spurns

“ That patient merit of the unworthy takes.”

The General said he would not press this. An appeal to the passions was generally held unargumentative, he would dismiss it, with only saying, the cause which he was pleading was one, in which the most amiable passions of the human breast, compassion, generosity, equity, and justice, were deeply concerned. He would now advert to the means that his mind suggested as the proper ones for fully investigating the subject, and applying due relief. He meant to move for a Committee, upon the precedent of that of the year 1746, “ to consider the “ state of His Majesty’s land forces upon the British establishment, so far as relates to the settlement of their accounts, “ and the payment of their arrears.” The Committee from which he took the precedent was composed of seventy-four Members ; he observed the names of the most respectable persons of the time, in and out of office, were included. He proposed also to move, in conformity to the same precedent, that all who came should have voices. For the mode of redress much would depend upon the report of the Committee : the natural mode, according to his present idea, would be to bring in a bill to explain and amend so much of Mr. Burke’s act, (which he must again mention with great praise, as to its intent) as would secure to the army the regular payment of arrears. The General concluded with saying, that whatever difference of opinion might arise hereafter, upon that or any other mode of redress, he could not believe there would be any opposition to his present motion for inquiry. Many of the delays and inconveniences he had stated, he would pledge himself to prove ; others, with which he was less acquainted, he had received from the reports of men of honour and veracity ; and if they were mistaken, it surely was for the credit of all parties in office, to come forward in promoting an investigation that would exculpate themselves, and if any serious evils were found to exist, would enable them to assist in removing

the causes. He should therefore move, " That a Committee be appointed to consider of the state of His Majesty's land forces, so far as relates to the settlement of their accounts, and the payment of their arrears, and that the said Committee do report their opinion thereupon to this House."

Major MAITLAND seconded the motion.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, after all the attention he had been able to give to what had been brought forward by the honourable General, he was not able to bring his mind to the conclusion that the proposed Committee was necessary; he did not see the necessity of the measure from any thing that had been stated. The honourable General had gone a little from the notice he gave, for that was only with regard to the arrears of the army, to the arrears of the subalterns of the army. Upon part of this he was mistaken, and had admitted it in the course of his speech to day; indeed he was so satisfied in this point on a former occasion, that he withdrew his motion. He admitted that Field Officers did receive their arrears, whether their accounts were passed or not; but the question was, as to the arrears of subalterns, as the honourable General had described. Upon this point he was a good deal misinformed. He wished the honourable gentleman had given himself the trouble of coming to him he would have given him much better information; as to the delay he mentioned, he was certainly misinformed. The whole delay had arisen from this circumstance. When accounts came in, difficulties arose, in the result of which the Officers were interested; and for the purpose of inquiring properly into all the circumstances, time had been taken, and that with the anxious wish, and on the part of Government, with the sole view of allowing to these officers every thing that could advance their interest, or contribute to their advantage. The delay, whenever it occurred, was in favour of the officers; and here it must be remembered, that when delay was mentioned, it was not a delay of all payment; subsistence was always issued; it was only part of the pay that was kept back. But when this delay was talked of—he really did not know whether he should enter minutely into the cause of it, the subject having so frequently been before the House—he did not know whether he should again enumerate the instances. Here he proceeded to shew that several accounts of regiments

were not brought in for five and six years together, during which time it was impossible to pay arrears, or to know what they were, or whether there were any; the result of which was that there was no fault imputable to the War Office.

As to the observations made on the garrison of Gibraltar, he admitted, that in fact such a memorial had been made, but the moment it was presented the arrears were issued. In short in this, as in every other case, there had been no delay in the War Office, nor had there ever originated any difficulty there. But in truth the whole case rested with the officers; if they were to exert themselves to bring forward their accounts, there would be no difficulty; the War Office wanted neither power nor disposition to avoid delay, or to remove all impediment; if they brought forward their accounts in the time and in the manner which they knew they might, and could do, there would be no difficulty, or the least cause for complaint. At present he knew of no difficulty, he knew of no impediment, he knew of no cause there could be for complaint. The whole, therefore, depended upon the officers, and if they felt any inconvenience, they had the remedy in their own hands. He saw, therefore, no reason whatever for this Committee, and should on that ground oppose the motion.

Mr. FRANCIS shortly stated, that from what knowledge he had acquired, during the time of his continuance in the War Office, he believed the office had a compulsive power over the agents of the respective regiments, and could coerce the delivering in of their accounts at a proper time; if the fact were so, some blame might be imputable to the War Office for not having done their duty, and obliged the agents of those regiments, referred to by the right honourable gentleman, to send in their accounts sooner.

Major MAITLAND began with declaring that he agreed perfectly with his honourable friend who had moved the question, that the subject of it was a point in which party prejudice could have no influence. It was a discussion in which all sides of the House must concur in wishes to do what could best accommodate the officers of the army. With regard to any blame imputable to the War Office, the Major disclaimed any such idea; he was persuaded none existed, and therefore he should proceed to the other parts of the subject. He took notice of

the late measure of increasing the pay of the private men, a measure in which he in common with the rest of the House most cordially concurred, as well as the principle on which it was done, but he could not, he said, agree that it was right to do it without some previous intimation to that House, because it looked like holding out to the soldiers, that they were to look up for comfort and consideration to one branch of the Legislature only, without the necessary concurrence of the other two. He remarked likewise, that when the increase of the pay of the privates was under consideration, the increase of the pay of officers might as well have been thought of, but he would say no more on that matter then. He entered into the question relative to the appointment of the regimental paymaster, and whether it lay with the Captain or the Colonel, and stated how that matter stood, inferring from his argument on that point, that the whole abuse the Captains could be guilty of, was to embezzle part of the poor pittance with which he was entrusted for the daily pay of the soldiers. He reasoned at some length on the improbability of a Captain's stopping the men's due, and shewed that such conduct might be punished with ignominy. He contended that the arrears of the subaltern and other officers ought not to be withheld, observing that their pay was but a poor pittance, God knew, and when they had it, they could scarcely live upon it. The officers and every individual in the army were particularly entitled to the consideration of that House, and that while they were attending to their comforts, they ought not to lose sight of their claims; when attending to their regulation, not to forget their rights. He ended with repeating what he had set out with, viz. that he imputed no blame whatever to office, but that he thought the proposed inquiry proper, and therefore he should vote for the motion for a Committee.

Mr. STEELE said, he should make no reply to what had fallen from the honourable Major relative to the increased pay of the privates, or to his opinion as to the increase that ought to have been made at the same time to the officers, because he did not conceive either of those matters came properly within the extent of the question then before them. The question was: whether the law in existence did meet the case of the clearing the accounts of the respective regiments, and whether those

exercising the offices of Secretary at War, and Paymaster General, were likely to abuse their trust. He entered into an examination of these two points, and clearly proved, that Mr. Burke's bill did lay down a precise and definite line of practice for office, and that that line of practice had been faithfully followed. He declared, it appeared to him that the difficulty was with the regiment itself, and that it chiefly rested with the Colonel or Commanding Officer, since he could compel his agent to send his accounts to the office in due time, That there might have been occasionally some inconvenience felt in particular cases, he could easily suppose; but he did not think the grievance of near the extent stated. To prove this, he went into a detail of the manner in which the accounts of the several regiments had turned out, when they came to be examined and finally made up, and stated, that it frequently happened, that the regiments were found to be indebted to the Public, instead of the Public being indebted to them. He particularly took notice of what General Burgoyne had stated respecting the arrears of his own regiment being four years due, accompanied with a hint, that his political conduct might probably have been in some degree the cause of it. Sure he was something like a hint of that sort had fallen from the honourable General; but he would proceed to the state of the arrears of the honourable General's regiment: the accounts of the first were cleared some time since, and governing the clearance by the delivery of the accounts to office, the latter had cleared them strictly within the time prescribed by the act of Parliament; the result was, that on finishing the accounts, it appeared that the 4th regiment, that commanded by the honourable General, stood indebted to the Public for the year 1788, in the sum of one hundred and twenty-two pounds. The accounts for the second of the four years, viz. 1789, were on the point of being cleared when the honourable General had first mentioned them; they had been cleared since, and there appeared to be due to the fourth regiment on that year thirty pounds; the accounts of the same regiment for the year 1790, had been delivered into office only in December last, and consequently the time for their being cleared was not yet past, and the accounts of the 4th regiment for 1791 of course was not yet in office. He declared he thought it necessary to say thus much with a view to

convince the House, that there was no solid ground for any alteration of Mr. Burke's bill, and therefore he hoped the House would not proceed to any such measure, without better conviction that they might alter the bill without impeding its operation or injuring its effect.

Colonel PHIPPS began with declaring, that he felt himself perfectly at ease to speak upon the subject, since it had been agreed, that it was not to be considered as a party question, but a subject of fair and free discussion, without regard to any one side of the House more than the other. He had been an utter stranger to the argument of the honourable General over the way, on a former occasion, when he had first introduced the subject, till he heard his speech, and consequently, a stranger to what sort of reply his right honourable friend, the Secretary at War would make to it, till he heard that likewise. He had since turned the matter in his mind a good deal, and had conversed much with other professional gentlemen since respecting it, and therefore he rose to state his opinion. He could not agree with the honourable gentleman who had held that Captains were not public accountants. Captains, Field Officers, Colonels, &c. were all public accountants, but in different degrees; and that was the distinction his right honourable friend below him [Mr. Steele] had missed. The Captain was, he said, a public accountant in some degree; the regimental paymaster in a great degree; and the Colonel in the greatest of all. What he objected to, was, that men should be made public accountants, who had no such trust, and that any should be made accountable farther than their agency went. He hoped, that one day or other some applicable means would be found to meet the exact degree in which particular officers of a regiment ought to be held public accountants. Another consideration that had escaped his right honourable friend was, that there was an essential difference between the amount of the money issued for a regiment, and that in the hands of the officers.—When his right honourable friend had argued, that on clearing the accounts of a regiment, there was money due to the Public, it did not follow that the officers of that regiment had got their arrears; the case was often otherwise. There were many crying grievances, under which the officers of the army laboured, with which gentlemen in office could not be so well

acquainted, as those who were of the profession to which he had the honour to belong. He had often seen those grievances, and known their effects. Among them, none were more severely felt than that of the arrears of a regiment being long withheld. He had seen honourable and deserving officers, men of the finest feelings and nicest honour driven from the service in consequence of it. Such men by an improvident expectation of their arrears being paid by a particular period, had contracted debts, which in consequence of their arrears not having been paid, they could not discharge when they became payable. Those officers had quitted all their pursuits of life, and abandoned a profession they preferred to all others, for the redemption of that honour. He was heartily glad that the discussion had taken place ; he was persuaded much good would result from it ; and if a Committee of Inquiry were appointed, thus much more at least would arise, that officers would be satisfied that the House had taken up their cause, that a due inquiry had been made, and that every practicable remedy, and every redress that the good of the service would admit, would be given them.

Sir J. ERSKINE SINCLAIR said, the House, and the army in general, owed gratitude to the honourable gentleman who spoke last, for the manly and soldier-like manner in which he had expressed his regret that such grievances did exist to the discouragement and disadvantage of many honourable men. He said, Captains were not in any shape public accountants ; and if they were, let them be tried in the same way that other public accountants were, by the application or misapplication of the sums entrusted to their distribution. But why are their arrears to be kept back, to answer purposes created by others, and in which they have no hand whatever ; in short, those who wished to place Captains in the same light as agents, by a strange fiction in reasoning, gave them all the disadvantages of public accountants, without any of their benefits. He said, that the issuing of money from Government to the agents had nothing to do with the payment to every officer of what was due to him—nor had a Captain any right to draw upon an agent, merely because Government had issued a sum of money to that agent. It was allowed on all hands that Mr. Burke's act was a good one ; the complaint was with regard to the execution

of that act. The honourable gentleman who spoke last had said, that those who stated the grievance ought to propose a remedy ; now, as a grievance was admitted to exist, he thought the best way of getting a remedy was to call for a Committee of Inquiry, which certainly would be much better able to suggest a proper remedy than any individual, or even two or three could be. It had been said, that officers had a power to compel the agents to deliver in the accounts to the War Office, agreeable to the time specified in the act ; but he would ask if officers, serving abroad, had this power, or how they could avail themselves of it. He said, the Secretary at War had allowed, that no arrears were paid since the year 1789, and he thought the justice, as well as the wisdom of the House, was called upon to inquire into the state of the arrears due to officers. With regard to the circular letter written in 1785, which stated, that officers applying personally to the War Office, would receive their arrears, that very letter mentioned, that it meant all officers in regiments about to be reduced ; now this was proper enough ; at the same time it was not possible, that officers in regiments, not to be reduced, could understand that they had the same right with those to whom the letter was addressed ; and this he believed to be the general opinion of the army. He concluded by vindicating General Burgoyne from the insinuation that had been thrown out, of his having said on a former day, that his political line of conduct had prevented his regiment from receiving their arrears, a sentiment which he knew the honourable gentleman never could have entertained for a moment.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, it was impossible that there could be any other wish in that House than that every officer in the service should be paid every farthing that was due to him. He was glad, however, that the discussion of this question had given an opportunity of explaining what was, not the general opinion, in consequence of the first opening of the business, viz. that there was no blame to be laid to the War Office, or the Pay Office, on account of the delay in paying arrears. A grievance seemed to be generally allowed, and a remedy ought to be found out ; but he saw no necessity for altering Mr. Burke's act, nor did he think that the Committee moved for was the most expeditious or efficacious way of pro-

curing the remedy, their inquiry would take up much time, because they must go through the whole machinery of the War Office, Pay Office, and agents' accounts; he thought, therefore, the matter ought to be submitted to official men, who would, he was certain, be ready to consult and take the advice of the honourable General, and other gentlemen conversant with the subject, after which, he had no doubt but a suitable remedy would be adopted.

Mr. FOX said, that the question had been treated very differently by the different gentlemen who had spoken upon it. It was said that there was no need to go into a Committee of Inquiry, because it was allowed that no blame lay against any of the public officers; but what was there to prove this? Nothing but mere assertion; and when a serious grievance was admitted on all hands, and when that admission was only answered by bare assertions, and nothing stated either to be the real cause of, or remedy for, that grievance, he thought a Committee of Inquiry was absolutely necessary. It had been contended, that no alteration of the act was necessary, and at the same time it had been allowed, that a grievance existed for which the act provided no remedy; this he certainly thought was a defect; he did not mean to speak against Mr. Burke's act, on the contrary, he declared it to be his opinion, that amongst the many great and brilliant works of that elegant Author, he thought there was none that did him more credit, in every respect, than that act. He said, the object of the present inquiry was certainly not to lay any imputation of misconduct against those in office, but to find out the cause of an existing grievance, and to apply a suitable remedy. And he must here observe, that in all great national reforms a Committee of that House was far better than leaving the business entirely to those in office at the time. In this, as well as in other cases, it might not always be the most expeditious way of getting at the remedy, but it certainly would be most efficacious. He wished, therefore, that the proposed Committee might be agreed to, and that it should consist not merely of official men, but of those men, whatever side of the House they sat upon, who were best able to assist in the discussion of the subject on which an opinion was required. As to the different turn which the debate had taken since the first day it was mentioned, when the arrears of subalterns

were only supposed to be the object, and now Captains and Field Officers were introduced, every one seemed to be pleased that the subject was now argued so fully. For his part, it was always his opinion that much public good arises at all times from the discussions and conversations in Parliament upon great and important constitutional questions.

Mr. MONTAGU opposed the motion, upon an idea, that there being a necessity for going into a Committee of Inquiry, might spread a general alarm over the country; and an opinion that there was something extremely wrong in the present official system with regard to the army.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, the question now lay in a very narrow compass, and he did not mean to say that it was brought by the other side of the House for purposes of hostility; but, certainly, the discussion of that day had taken a different ground from what it assumed on the opening of the business; an impression certainly had been left on the minds of the House, that the War Office was to blame for the delay in paying the arrears; that that was not the case, was now generally admitted; but the right honourable gentleman had said, we have no proof that the War Office is not to blame, and therefore he calls for a Committee of Inquiry, and he says, there are only mere assertions in answer to grievances agreed to on all sides. Now when these grievances are allegations on one side, and answered not merely by assertions on the other, but authentic documents, which he contended the papers on the table moved for by the Secretary at War were, he could see no occasion for the proposed Committee, nor could he possibly see that a Committee of Inquiry was the best way to procure a remedy. If, therefore, allegations were to be made, and assertions supported by authentic documents were not to be reckoned sufficient answers to those allegations, there would be no end to calls for Committees of Inquiry upon subjects even of the most trifling nature. He defended Mr. Burke's act, and thought it came as near perfection as any act could have done for its purposes. Though regiments at home could only be affected by the regulations specified in the act, he knew no difficulties arising from it to the regiments abroad. With regard to the rights of officers to compel the delivery of accounts, he said, the shortest way to obtain all their rights was to abide by the established le-

gal regulations. He contended that it was better that the accounts should be settled before the arrears were paid. The discussion, he thought, had been a very proper one, and he trusted, means would be found for applying a remedy to the grievance complained of.

Mr. FOX said, a few words in explanation, as did Mr. Pitt,

General BURGOYNE rose for the same purpose, and particularly cleared himself from the imputation thrown out by Mr. Steele, viz. that he had ever hinted that the arrears of his regiment had been withheld for four years on account of the political line of conduct he had of late years pursued. He said he adopted that line of conduct upon principle, and upon principle he was likely to continue it; but that he had never for a moment entertained an idea, that any Administration would revenge the political conduct of one man on the officers of a whole regiment. He declared that he had never once dreamt of such a matter, and if he could have ever been brought to think so, he would that instant have gone and laid his regiment at the feet of the King; because if such a measure could have entered into the heads of any set of men, he would not have held his regiment another moment on the condition of his being the cause of the inconveniencies of other men, men who had distinguished themselves meritoriously on every occasion.

Mr. STEELE, in explanation, said, he had never meant to impute to the honourable General a meaning that he had not appeared desirous to suggest, but the honourable General had, as far as his recollection served, when he mentioned the case of the arrears of his own regiment remaining unpaid, accompanied it with saying, "that he was unwilling to impute the circumstance to any consideration with respect to the line of political conduct that he had pursued," or words to that effect, for Mr. Steele declared he was far from intending to quote the honourable General's words.

General BURGOYNE protested, on his solemn word of honour, that he did not mean any thing like the construction that had been given to his words.

Mr. STEELE repeated, that something to the effect that he had mentioned, the honourable General, whom he wished always to treat with respect, had certainly said.

Sir GEORGE HOWARD professed his sincere conviction that no blame was imputable to the War Office, and declared, that he had the pleasure of having several conversations with his right honourable friend on the subject, but that he had been a good deal surpris'd at hearing, in the course of that day's debate, that regimental accounts were cleared without delay at the Office, and that every opportunity for explanation on the subject of disallowances made officially from the regimental accounts was constantly afforded. Sir George said, that declaration expressly contradicted information which he had received in writing, and which was contained in a letter he had then in his pocket, wherein it was stated, that regimental accounts had laid two and three years in the Office unopened; that when they had passed the official investigation, disallowances to a large amount had been made, and upon the agent's remonstrance, and desire to be permitted to know to what charges the objection was made, and to explain them, the answer was, "You can be informed nothing about it; the Office has done it, the money is gone, and the warrant for the issue of the balance is sent down to the Pay Office." Sir George said he should vote for the Committee.

Colonel FITZPATRICK contended that the whole of the question had been put upon new grounds, by what the House had just heard from the honourable General over the way, as what he had said amounted to a direct charge upon the War Office. It was therefore, the Colonel said, more necessary than ever that the whole should go to a Committee for inquiry. From the beginning of the discussion, the Colonel declared, he was persuaded no blame was imputable to the War Office, and it was generally admitted that there was not; but each gentleman who spoke in the debate, had admitted also, that officers in the army had much to complain of, and each imputed it to a different cause; the different reasons, therefore, that had been given, were, in his mind, so many different arguments for going into a Committee to inquire. What the last honourable gentleman had said, was, in his opinion, a direct challenge to the Secretary at War, which he ought, for the honour of the War Office, to accept.

Sir GEORGE HOWARD said, he had given no challenge to the War Office; that he had merely stated that what he had

heard had contradicted information in writing, which he had received, but on the authenticity of which he did not place any great reliance.

The SECRETARY AT WAR declared, he felt what had fallen from his honourable relation in a different light ; that it was no challenge, and he had heard nothing to induce him to give his consent to the motion.

Mr. COURTENAY, in a very few words, urged the necessity of going into a Committee, and concluded, that it was utterly impossible for a Secretary at War, on a British establishment, to understand the circular letters of 1785, which expressly referred to the officers of regiments then about to be reduced, to refer to the subalterns of all the regiments at the same time in the service.

The House at length called for the question, and divided ;
Ayes, 33 ; Noes, 74.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 13th March.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS moved, “ That there be laid before this House, An account of the annual revenues of the East-India Company in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, and from Benares and Oude, under the heads of Mint and Coinage Duties, Post-Office Collections, Benares Revenue, Oude Subsidy, Land Revenues, Customs, and the receipts from the sales of salt and opium for three years, according to the latest advices ; together with the latest estimate.” Mr. Dundas afterwards moved twenty-nine other accounts of revenues and other charges of the East-India Company, the same as the last session.

Mr. FOX observed, that in two years the charter of the India Company would expire. He wished to know whether it was the intention of Ministers to move any thing upon that subject that might lead to an inquiry into the affairs of India, previous to the discussion of the charter.

Mr. DUNDAS said, that nothing in that particular was in contemplation—perhaps something might occur that should render such a motion necessary.

Mr. FOX said, that previous to the bringing in a bill upon this subject, he should move for a Committee of Inquiry. He did not now know when he should do so, but he only wished Ministers to be apprised it was his intention.

Mr. THOMPSON rose, he said, to execute a task which he had undertaken; the task of a public accuser of a public man. It was necessary for him to state, that in consequence of rumours circulated out of doors, he had made certain inquiries, the result of which he should now submit to the House. He had undertaken this charge purely from the sense he had of his public duty as one of the representatives of the people, totally unconnected with any animosity against the honourable gentleman who was the object of this accusation. It was to his public duty that he wished to dedicate himself; and if the honourable gentleman who was the object to whose conduct he wished to direct any inquiry, should be able to explain himself to the satisfaction of the House, he should be glad of it. This he said, merely for the purpose of vindicating himself against any aspersions on his character, for the impropriety of his motives. The honourable Secretary of the Treasury had said on a former day, that he was conscious of his innocence, and heartily courted an inquiry, and wished for the hour for his vindication. That hour was come, and he hoped that honourable gentleman would not again say, he suspected him of an intention to shrink from the charge which he had thought fit to make. The rumour to which he alluded, originated in consequence of a trial in the Court of King's Bench, in which the honourable Secretary was defendant, at the suit of a Mr. Smith, for business done, in behalf of Lord Hood, at an election for Westminster. The substance of the evidence in that trial, went to charge Mr. Rose with having interfered in that election in an unwarrantable manner, and on which he founded his intentions of moving for a Committee of Inquiry upon the subject. It appeared in the evidence given on that trial, that Mr. Smith had some time before been convicted in a penalty of 50*l.* for an offence against the Excise laws; and that afterwards, in consequence of services performed by Mr. Smith, at the request of Mr. Rose, in the course of that election, part of the fine was remitted to him. That in the course of this transaction Mr. Smith had been introduced to Mr. Rose, through the good of-

fices of an honourable Member of that House. [“ Name him, “ name him,” was generally exclaimed.] This Mr. Thompson declined, but proceeded to state the various circumstances of the conversation between Mr. Smith and Mr. Rose, by which it would appear that Mr. Rose had actually been the means of procuring a remission of part of this excise fine, for his services in the election, in behalf of the Court candidate, Lord Hood. This would appear from the inquiry, beyond the possibility of a doubt. Having stated this, and also many points, on which the inference appeared to him to be clear, that this was the conduct of Mr. Rose; and having alluded to the publication of the trial of an action brought up by Mr. Smith against Mr. Rose, and the points there proved to the satisfaction of a jury, who gave Mr. Smith a verdict for the amount of his bill; and that it appeared by that trial what part Mr. Rose had acted on that occasion, he came to the conclusions to be drawn from this; and here he wished the House to reflect on the consequence of a Secretary to the Treasury employing the money of the Public for the purpose of supporting the election of a Member of that House. He wished them to reflect on the probable consequences of suffering the public to understand that their money was wasted for the corrupt purpose of procuring seats in that House for the friends of the Minister. He wished them to reflect on the public contempt, if not the indignation they might, by suffering such proceedings to pass unnoticed, bring upon the whole House. They should remember, that it was on the opinion the Public entertained of the House, it could be fairly said its character rested, and that it was from the people it derived the whole of its power and authority. What care then, if they wished to maintain this character, or preserve this power, should they not take to impress the people with a well-founded belief, that they would never connive at bribery and corruption. That the people are not taxed to support the corrupt elections, but to support the state. To succeed in such a practice, as had been imputed to the honourable Secretary, or rather to escape an inquiry, would either lay the foundation of disturbances, and finally the downfall of our state, or totally extinguish the very principle and essence of liberty in this country. He had made this accusation. He was ready to support it by proof. The honourable

gentleman had asserted his innocence. Let the House grant the inquiry, and the subject would be properly adjusted. If the honourable gentleman was innocent, he ought to have an opportunity of making his innocence public. If he was guilty, he should not be suffered to escape. "I have," said Mr. Thompson, "put George Rose, Esq. fairly upon his trial, and God send him a good deliverance." He concluded with moving, "That this House will, upon Friday morning next, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to inquire into all abuses committed by persons in office at the election of a Member to serve in Parliament for the city of Westminster in July 1788, as far as the same relative to penalties incurred under the excise laws, or lottery act."

Mr. LAMBTON rose, the House being rather clamorous. He observed that clamour and confusion should not deter him from pursuing his duty. He first of all begged leave to say, that what he had already heard, would have been sufficient for him to support the motion; but if that were not enough, he had a charge of a much more flagrant nature against those who have the conduct of public affairs—It was more criminal in point of size than that which had been first exhibited. Like his honourable friend he had no motive for the part he was about to take, but a sense of duty to his constituents, and in the very onset of the business he begged leave to assure the right honourable gentleman opposite to him, that he disclaimed all party spleen, and had no private pique whatever on his mind against him or any man, however they might differ in opinion upon political subjects. In the year 1788, one Hoskins being at that time in prison, at the suit of the Solicitor to the lottery for 700*l.* in order to answer certain penalties for offences against the lottery act, for which he could not find bail, wrote to the Solicitor, telling him he could procure fifty or sixty votes for Lord Hood at the Westminster election, provided he could be admitted to bail, and that such bail as he should offer would not be objected to. The Solicitor to the lottery, in answer to this, said, he could not do this on his own accord, but must have authority from a higher quarter. The man was afterwards admitted to bail, and his bail were a couple of the most miserable, wretched, shabby-looking raggamuffins that ever offered to commit perjury. Their appearance shewed, that so far from

being able to swear that they were worth 700*l.* they had not sixpence in their pockets, exclusive of the pittance that had been paid them, as the price of the scandalous crime they were hired to commit. Nay, so wretched was their appearance, that when they came to take the necessary oaths before the Judge at Chambers, although they brought a note from the Solicitor to the lottery, signifying his consent to their bail, the Judge's clerk thought it so impossible, that the Solicitor to the lottery could mean to accept two such shabby-looking fellows as bail for 700*l.* that he actually refused to swear them. The fact however was, their bail was taken, and John Hoskins did actually poll for Lord Hood sixty votes: from which time, neither Hoskins, nor his bail, have been heard of. Mr. Lambton having stated this fact, observed, that the Public, it appeared, had paid 700*l.* out of their pockets, for voting falsely for Lord Hood. And if Ministers could, as their political convenience rendered it necessary, suspend the operations of some laws, and remit the operation of others, where was the freedom of the country? All this would be proved if the Committee of Inquiry was granted. It would be proved too, that other practices had been followed, equally disgraceful—the whole forming a mass of evidence that would let the Public into the knowledge of circumstances, of which at present they had no idea. It would explain to the country the principles of modern confidence in Ministers. If proved, there would, he hoped, be an end of the virtue of the confiding majority of that House. It would render the majority of the House suspected—.

[The SPEAKER was here pleased to call the honourable gentleman to order, and was supported by a very general cry of "Order! Order!—Chair! Chair!" The Speaker observed, that it was quite disorderly to glance reproachfully on the conduct of a majority of that House.]

Mr. Lambton apologized, and declared, that he meant to cast no reflection on the majority, or their motives, that had he not been called to order prematurely, and before he had concluded the sentiment he was uttering, he did not believe he should have been deemed disorderly, or deserving of the reproof that he had received, as he was going to add, "unless the House granted the Committee of Inquiry then moved for." Having said this, he resumed the thread of his argu-

ment, and exclaimed against the effects of corruption on the electors as well as the elected. He said, they all knew, that the Roman Emperors, by bribing and corrupting the Senate, governed Rome, and trampled down her liberties with as much unrestrained licence, as if there had existed no Senate at all. That it was to the purity of election they were to look as to the source of freedom, and the origin of all their dearest rights and privileges. That it behoved them to be particularly watchful in times like these, when luxury and extravagance opened an easy door to corruption, by reciprocally enervating all the vigour of virtue, and all the better energies of the mind. He spoke of the splendid and brilliant eloquence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech on a late occasion, which they all so much admired, and which might fairly be termed the *Io Pæan* of the right honourable gentleman's finance; but he confessed, the satisfaction that speech gave him, was much abated in his mind, when he learnt the manner in which the right honourable gentleman meant to appropriate his surplus; he thought the right honourable gentleman might have found a more soothing anodyne for the late armament, than he had presented them on that occasion; and that he might have relaxed the rigour of his excise laws, the reason of the extension of which odious system was now apparent, since it was evident that the excise was found to be an admirable instrument of punishment or reward, of oppression or corruption. He concluded with observing, that Mr. Rose himself ought to vote for the Committee; for that if he was innocent, as he said he was, it was a duty which he owed to his character to submit it to inquiry. If he was guilty, the House was criminal in suffering him to escape from punishment. He therefore heartily seconded the motion.

Mr. ROSE began his defence with declaring, that he would not have persisted in endeavouring to be heard first, if he had not been so very particularly alluded to, that it became absolutely necessary that he should make an immediate reply to the charges that had been stated. The honourable gentleman who made the motion, he observed, had declared that on the present occasion he came forward with no invention of his own, but that he was the mouth-piece of the Public, and stated no more than the Public talked of and believed; it was not a very easy mat-

ter to know precisely who the Public was ; every body one met was the Public ; and possibly the honourable gentleman found the Public in newspaper paragraphs and libellous pamphlets ; he would not go the length of saying that what the honourable gentleman had advanced was his own invention, but he could not avoid expressing his astonishment at the honourable gentleman's credulity in venturing to bring before the House in the serious and solemn manner that he had done, charges, which if he did not before he sat down, prove to the satisfaction of the House, not only that every part of them was not true, but they had not in them the smallest degree of truth, nor any shadow or trace of truth whatever, he should be more mistaken than ever he had been in his life. He proceeded to state the whole of the transactions of every kind, that had taken place between Mr. Smith and himself, and the greater part of what he said, he supported, by written documents. He began with explaining, that Mr. Smith had kept a livery stable, and that he had been in the habit of hiring horses of him, to go the first stage out of town, that he had not seen the man to his knowledge nor should he have known him if he had met him, before he sent him a petition enclosed in a letter, in 1789, both of which he would read to the House. The petition stated, that Mr. Smith having had an information lodged against him for brewing beer at home, had been convicted in a penalty of fifty pounds ; that the beer was small beer for the use of his own family, that he was a poor man, altogether ignorant that it was contrary to law to brew small beer for the use of his family, and that he had no intention to commit any offence whatever against the laws of his country. The petition farther stated, that one third of the penalty went to the poor of the parish, one third to the informer, and the other to the King. The letter stated that the vestry of St. Martin's (or St. Margaret's) were willing to give up their third of the penalty, provided he (Mr. Rose) would procure the remission of the King's other two thirds. Thus, the Member of Parliament through whose medium, according to the honourable gentleman, Smith had been introduced to him, was no other than the vestry of St. Martin's. With the petition, Mr. Rose said, he did exactly what in the ordinary course of business he ever did whenever petitions were sent to him, viz. referred it to the

Board to whose cognizance the subject matter belonged.— Smith's petition he enclosed to Mr. Cholmondeley the Chairman of the Excise Board, and afterwards upon another application, understanding that Mr. Cholmondeley was out of town, and the petition with him, he wrote to the Secretary to beg him to get the Board to suspend deciding upon Smith's case till Mr. Cholmondeley came to town, and on no other account than merely because Mr. Cholmondeley had the petition with him. But to shew the House of what little avail his interference had proved, the petition was rejected by the Board of Excise, and Mr. Rose read the Secretary's answer, with the decision of the Board, in which the Secretary declared, “ that all the allegations were untrue; that Smith was not a poor man; that the beer brewed was strong; and not small beer; that he well knew what he had done was illegal; that he contrived to get the malt into his house so privately, that even his brewer, (who was the person that had informed against him) did not know when or whence it came, that he had long been in the habit of brewing and conveying it into his own cellars for sale, and that if the penalty had been 500*l.* instead of 50*l.* it would not have been adequate to the beer he had brewed.” Here, therefore, was a clear proof that he had not influenced the Board in their decision. Half the penalty had actually been levied, and the other half was to be paid by installments. This, he solemnly said, was the whole of the transaction between Smith and him, as far as regarded the penalty of 50*l.* During the time of the last general election, Smith came to him, as he was going out, and made a proposition for opening his house, and declared in his entry, that he could detect a great number of bad votes that had been given for Lord John Townshend, when he answered, “ Do so, if you can, it will be doing a right thing,” but as to any proposition on the subject of the election, he must go to Lord Hood's Committee. He did so, found the bad votes he said he could find, and at length applied to him to be paid. The answer he gave him, was, “ Return to Lord Hood's Committee, they'll pay you.” Smith afterwards again demanded payment of him, and commenced an action, which was tried in the Court of King's Bench. He would not impeach the justice of the Court, nor the integrity of the jury; such a case was

certainly made out as to induce them to give a verdict for Smith. These were the facts, but did any man in his senses suppose that he (Mr. Rose) if he had felt the least consciousness of being really indebted to Smith, that he would have suffered the cause to have gone into a Court of Justice? Most certainly he would not, he never had sent a man who had a demand upon him, twice from his door in the whole course of his life; but he must still think, that Smith had not a right to call on him for payment; he had opened no House, (not that he should have done wrong, if he had) nor made himself responsible in any sort whatever. In proof of the facts he had stated, Mr. Rose read a variety of papers, and after declaring, that he had stated the whole of his conduct respecting Smith; as to any thing that might have passed between him and any of the officers of the Board of Excise, he said, he hoped he was not to be made responsible for them. It was not, Mr. Rose observed, necessary for him to say much of himself, because, however party might influence gentlemen with whom he was not acquainted, the friends who knew him, he trusted, would find nothing in his character or any part of his conduct sufficient to warrant even a momentary suspicion, that he would be mean enough to act so scandalous and base a part as calumny had imputed to him; and even if, for the sake of argument, it were admitted that he could sink so low, did any person living imagine such a man as Mr. Cholmondeley would join with him in such a disgraceful scene? There was not, he declared, in the world a better friend to the revenue, a man of more unimpeached integrity, nice honour and high spirit, than Mr. Cholmondeley, as all who knew him, he would venture to say, would readily acknowledge; nor was there, he believed, in existence, a man who would have felt more repugnance to take a part in such a business than the gentleman he was alluding to. With regard to the other charge, that respecting the admitting Hoskins to bail, by sham bail, he protested he had never even heard the man's name before that day, and was it likely that Lord Hood would have desired his agent to act such a part as had been ascribed to him? It appeared to him, that if Lord Hood had permitted his agent to do what had been stated, it would have been nothing less than subjecting him to have had his head put in the pillory. Mr. Rose averred, that what he

had said was the whole of the transaction which he had ever had with Smith; but if any gentlemen were not disposed to believe him, it did not depend on his assertions alone; the officers of the Excise were at the door, and ready to come to the bar of the House to confirm them. Neither the Excise laws, nor any authority that he might be supposed to possess, had ever been made use of for any purpose that could, upon the strictest investigation, be deemed improper, much less for election purposes. But if any person could think so ill of him as to suppose he would so prostitute his situation, did they imagine the exalted characters who sat at the Treasury Board would suffer it? He concluded with saying, that if it should be necessary, the House, he hoped, would indulge him in giving such explanations as might be called for.

Lord HOOD said, he was really at a loss to know what to say on the case of Hoskins—he had never heard of him in his life. With regard to any thing that his agent had done, when he stated that he had in the first instance offered to submit his bill to arbitration, and that after much shifting and doubling in the Court of King's Bench, compelled his agent to submit to arbitration, when the arbitrators had taken off 2800*l.* from it, and given his agent only a thousand, declaring it to be an ample and liberal recompense for the whole of his trouble, would any gentleman contend, that what had been said or done by such a man, was a fit subject for that House to make the topic of serious debate, or that he was entitled to any credit whatever?

Mr. GREY supported the motion, and maintained, that nothing had been stated in the course of the debate to make it appear, that the House ought not to grant the Committee that had been moved for. He laid great stress on the case of Hoskins, and said, the right honourable gentleman had solemnly declared, that he never caused any mitigation of the penalty which Smith had incurred under the Excise laws to be made. He begged to know if he had not done it through Mr. Vivian, the Solicitor to the Board of Excise? He produced a note, dated April 1789, from Mr. Rose to Mr. Smith, appointing him to meet Mr. Vivian at eight o'clock the next morning, at his own house in Palace Yard. With regard to what the right honourable gentleman had said, in denial that Mr. Smith applied to him through the medium of a Member of Parliament,

and had termed that Member of Parliament the vestry, the right honourable gentleman's memory must have been very imperfect, and must have failed him wonderfully if he recollected nothing of the circumstance. To refresh his memory, he would mention who the Member was, the Member of Liverpool. Upon the whole, he contended, that there was enough before the House to induce them to inquire into it, and the honourable gentlemen on the other side, unless they felt that something would come out in that inquiry, which they did not wish to be known, ought to be among the first to propose a Committee, and the last to shrink from the motion. If they, on their side, had stated, what they could not prove, it might be the more disadvantageous to them to have a Committee, but so far from entertaining such an idea, he would end with saying, that the House ought to go into a Committee.

Mr. ROSE in explanation said, he could not recollect amidst the variety of notes which he had occasion to write, every individual note; but what did the note produced by the honourable gentleman prove? It was dated April 1789, and the penalty was levied afterwards, consequently there had been no interference of his that had availed Mr. Smith. With regard to the Member of Parliament, he did now recollect, that the honourable gentleman alluded to, kept his horses at the same stable yard. They accidentally met there, and the honourable gentleman mentioned the case of Smith, as a case of compassion, and stated the same facts as were alledged in the petition, that he had read to the House, and which the Secretary to the Excise Board stated to be false.

Mr. GASCOYNE rose in consequence of the allusion that had been made to him, and began with stating, that he had long kept away by the affliction he had felt from a domestic loss, but that he was glad he that day happened to be able to attend his duty, because he always wished when any gentleman meant to bring any charge against him, that he would do it in his presence, when he should have an opportunity of making a reply. He had little imagined the matter referred to by the right honourable gentleman over the way, would ever have been declared of importance enough to have been mentioned in that House. As it had been mentioned, he would state the whole of the fact in question. He then gave an account of his having

kept his horses with Mr. George Smith for a long time, that he thought they did not appear to have had justice done to them, and he blamed his own servant; but at last he found the fault lay with Smith himself, and that he took them away; that he had previously learnt the affair of Smith's being under a prosecution, and had certainly mentioned it to his honourable friend; recommending Smith, as he then understood him to be a fit object of compassion, and had begged that either he, or his right honourable friend, would interfere with the Board of Excise to have the penalty mitigated, which he understood to be by no means an unusual thing where the party was poor, and there was no proof of bad intention. He had since had reason to believe that he had been imposed on, and that Smith had not more honesty than other folks. Mr. Gascoyne apologized for introducing such a trivial subject into that House as the mention of his horses, but he said, it was necessary to lead to the fact in question.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that with regard to the second part of the charge, he wished to know whether the honourable gentlemen who had spoken had any allegation, or any thing that they supposed would be material to their allegation, upon the fact of the fine of 700*l.* being remitted by any gentleman in office, or whether they supposed they had any evidence that could be material for their allegation in that respect; or if they refused to give it now, in what they would be able, or hoped they would be able, to give it, or by what means they thought it would be made out. He requested the honourable gentlemen who had moved and seconded the question, that as they had stated that the object of the Committee was to inquire into "practices of gentlemen high in office," that they would distinctly name who the persons, against whom such practices could be alledged, were.

Mr. FOX said, it occurred to him that the honourable gentleman who had brought this subject forward, had stated ground sufficient for an inquiry into this case. The question was, whether such interference had taken place, on the part of the Ministers, as had been stated—or whether, upon the stated interference, there was ground for inquiry? To this it was objected, that the charges were false. Then it was replied,—

"We can prove all this by papers we shall lay upon your

“ table—we shall prove this beyond dispute by oral testimony
“ —we can prove the whole of our allegation.—We can
“ prove first, that some how or other this man got out of pri-
“ son—we can prove that having done so, he polled for Lord
“ Lord.—We can prove that he was detained for 700l. on a
“ clause of having incurred the penalty of the Lottery act—
“ we can prove that he came out by sham bail—we can prove
“ that all this is traced to the authority of gentlemen in office
“ —that it was under the inspection of the Solicitor of the
“ Lottery.” What then follows? That the House shall
pronounce a Minister guilty? No! Only that they should in-
quire. The whole of this would be produced in evidence. It
would be produced in evidence, that an application was made
to the Solicitor on behalf of this very man; nay, by himself,
to the Solicitor of the Lottery, stating the cause of his con-
finement, and stipulating the condition of his release;—that
sham bail was proposed to be offered—that the Solicitor said he
must consult others from whom he received his authority.—
Something more, that Lord Hood had actually paid his attor-
ney’s bill, in which is contained an item for the expence of
conducting this very act! for procuring bail, and effecting the
discharge of this very person!—Was this not enough to enter
on an inquiry? A man in prison for the sum of 700l. under a
penal statute, to be discharged on condition of serving an elec-
tion candidate, by the worst of all means—perjury and corrup-
tion! The bare suspicion of this ought to make a man impa-
tient for an opportunity of making his defence. Why then
not go into the Committee? The other part of the charge
which applied to the honourable Secretary, met with a curious
reception from that honourable gentleman. He says, that his
conduct is plain and above-board. If so, why refuse to inquire
into it? What is there to fear if your conduct is fair? The
note sent by Mr. Rose to Mr. Smith was, that Mr. Rose
wished to see him on the next morning, and stating that he had
some business to settle with him, and that if he came, he
would have an opportunity of meeting Mr. Cholmondeley.—
Was this pure civility of introducing them to each other? Had
the honourable Secretary no other use for his house? Was there
to be no conversation on the Excise fine?—Was it probable,
that being left with each other, without a third person, for the

Secretary was not there, that Smith would not have mentioned the fine which he had been ordered to pay? Pure civility this, no doubt! This was, in his opinion, a strong instance in which the House were called upon to interfere.

Another circumstance came to his mind, which was, that the honourable Secretary had observed that he must admire the credulity of gentlemen who believed what they had heard on the subject of the Excise fine, or that Smith's demand upon the honourable Secretary was just. He was of opinion there was nothing due, or he would not have resisted the demand. It was his constant practice never to suffer any person to call twice for one just demand. All this might be very true, but the answer to it was, that the jury to whom this case was referred decided otherwise. The House had the assertion of the Secretary of the Treasury against the solemn decision of the jury. In the opinion of the jury, the honourable gentleman, notwithstanding his knowledge, was mistaken. In the proof which Mr. Smith had to adduce he was mistaken. In the proof that was to be given against him on this subject, he pretended to have complete knowledge. Whether he had better acquaintance with the disposition of that House than he had with the integrity of the jury, he knew not: but he must think it would be unfortunate for this country if he could control its decision. If he could not, the opinion he had given of his sagacity in the former case, gave him no great pretension to be regarded for prophetic powers that would supercede the necessity of inquiry in that House, by anticipating the effect. Upon this trial evidence was given, that something in the nature of a remission of a fine was made from Mr. Rose to Mr. Smith. No such thing, says Mr. Rose. What then should the House say—Yes, or No? Neither. Let us inquire, was the only answer they could honestly make.

As to the Solicitor of the lottery, and the supposition that gentlemen in office could not be deemed responsible for any act of his, supposing that he had consented to the escape of the person out of the King's Bench, or for the remission of the fine from the Board of Excise, supposing that to have taken place, he was far from allowing this doctrine to be right. He rather thought that a certain degree of responsibility should attach to them for the negligence of their inferiors, because it was their

duty to inquire into their conduct, and to prevent such enormous abuses. At all events that House should inquire into the abuse, and affix the censure where it was due.

He had observed, that all that had been said on the other side against the claim of Mr. Smith was, that generally speaking, he was a bad man; from whence they of course deduced that he ought not to have been paid. If he was of that description, he had better fortune than attends the wicked in general, for that with the persons with whom he contended he obtained a victory. With ~~one~~ honourable gentleman he (Mr. Gascoyne) had a bill; it was said to be an unjust one, but he paid it for the purpose of avoiding litigation. With another he had a bill, but that was not paid to avoid, but in consequence of, litigation. Possibly Mr. Smith was a rogue in all his claims, yet an English jury thought him right in one of them, for they gave him a verdict to the amount of his whole bill. It might be, that the jury were wrong, but as they had decided upon their oaths one way, and the Secretary to the Treasury was placed in another, the least the House could do would be to institute an inquiry. Courts of law in general refused to hear a man's own evidence in his own cause; but if this Committee was refused, the House would not only admit the Secretary to the Treasury in his own cause, but would believe his assertion in support of his own interest, in preference to the verdict of a jury!

As to the point of precedent for this, he had to maintain, that it was most clearly in favour of the motion by the practice of the House. So much had the House favoured inquiries, that they had voted for them in cases where ~~there~~ was but little prospect of success, and where ultimately the inquiries tended to be nothing. He alluded to the inquiry obtained by Mr. Shove, upon the case of Queensbury, and of Mr. Luttrell on another occasion. These things he instanced, as proof of the general spirit the House had for inquiry, or cases stated of abuse. He argued, that if disposed towards it here, there was no room for the opponents of the motion to say this inquiry is not proper, because you have not made out a case to entitle you to a hearing. The fact was not so; for the case, supposing it to be true, would be an alarming charge. Of the truth, or falsehood of it, the House could not judge without inquiry; he

would venture to say, he knew there would be evidence of what was charged. He concluded with declaring, that he saw fair ground for criminality in this case, and therefore found it his duty to vote for the motion.

Mr. Chancellor PITT opposed the motion for this inquiry. He observed that the question which he put to gentlemen who supported this motion had not been answered; instead of giving him any answer, they had given him arguments; the question being still unanswered, his objections remained unremoved upon this subject. When gentlemen on the other side talk of a penalty being remitted, and being asked who it was who remitted it—would they undertake to make out any criminal charge against gentlemen high in office? That was the nature of the motion, and not that of asserting any thing against the Solicitor of the Lottery, or of the Board of Excise. These complaints, if true, would not make any thing out against gentlemen high in office, consequently afford no support to the present motion. If this charge was to be made, against whom was it to be made? They had not so much as stated the person against whom the charge was to be made—that they should prove it when made, or that even they themselves believed it. He contended that this was too vague to found a criminal inquiry upon, and a subject by no means likely to reward the House for the trouble which it would incur by this inquiry. The question was, “whether there was presumption enough “for that House to form a rational belief that the charges would “be specially made out,” and on this he was clearly of opinion there was no prospect that the House would have any such evidence. He professed himself a friend to a sober and rational inquiry, on fair grounds stating the probability of guilt in the persons accused, but this was not the case in the present instance, and the House would not vote a criminal inquiry upon conjecture, surprise, or insinuation, however ingeniously or vehemently supported. To take up the time of the House upon these unfounded inquiries, would only impede the progress of public business, and derogate from the dignity which belonged to the deliberative character of the House. In cases like these, if the House adopted the motion, no character, however exalted in station, or however distinguished by integrity, would be safe from false accusation for a moment. In order to set in-

quiry on foot, it was only to make a charge, and to maintain it by as many hard words as possible, and that House must enter into a public inquiry without the slightest foundation.—These things he wished to put to the integrity and common sense of the House, and to ask them to reflect, whether by the dictates of either, they felt themselves called upon to vote for this inquiry.

Mr. FOX said, he would not bear what the right honourable gentleman had imputed to gentlemen on his side of the House to pass uncorrected. He had said, that they wished for a Committee merely on an insinuation, that perhaps they might find guilt. On the contrary he had expressly said, that there was matter for inquiry upon record—there was proof positive, which if they went into the Committee would clearly produce a charge of a criminal nature against a person or persons high in office. He had said explicitly that such charge would come out; it remained for the House to say, whether with such circumstances laid before them they would prevent inquiry, and stand between the criminal and justice.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he desired that they should make a specific charge, and name the person whom they accused—for he did not consider it as a sufficient ground for parliamentary inquiry that there was a suspicion thrown out—that there was an unqualified charge made against persons high in office—and that therefore without naming them, they ought to go into a Committee to inquire into the facts, and to discover who had committed the presumed offence.

Mr. LAMBTON said, he had not revealed a most material part of the charge, which, in the Committee, he had reason to believe, would be brought home to persons high in office. What had they heard? The Secretary of the Treasury having his memory refreshed, had already confessed, what he at first declared to have utterly forgot—namely, that a Member of this House did interfere in favour of Mr. Smith. He had confessed also, that perhaps he might have written a card, inviting Mr. Smith to meet his prosecutor, the Solicitor of the Excise, at his house. He had confessed this, after first deliberately stating that his transmission of the petition to Mr. Cholmondeley, and his letter to the Secretary of the Excise, was all the interference he had made in the affair. If he had confessed

so much already, what might not be brought forth when his memory should be farther refreshed in the Committee? When they should call for papers, and when witnesses should be brought to the bar? Mr. Lambton said, he had substantial reasons for advancing that more would be brought out. He would take upon himself to say, that it would be proved—1, That Mr. Hoskins was under arrest for penalties incurred under the lottery act to the amount of 700*l.* and that during the election he offered to bring up sixty votes provided he was suffered to escape—2, That the Solicitor to the lottery, who was also agent for the candidate, a Lord of the Admiralty, said in answer, that he must consult higher authority—3, That Hoskins was suffered to escape by two bail being accepted not worth a shilling, and upon the express agreement of the Solicitor—and 4, That the noble Lord of the Admiralty, a high public officer, has within the last fourteen days, that is since the first rumour of the present motion, paid his agent's bill, in which, among other items, there is this charge—to the expence of finding bail for the action against Hoskins, who engaged to bring up sixty votes, 3*l.* 3*s.* The expence of finding this bail was more, it appeared, than 3*l.* 3*s.* ; but the friends of Hoskins had advanced 10*l.* and the agent had charged and received only the farther sum which he paid. Now these links of the chain he engaged to prove, and he had reason to believe that in the Committee they should be able to come at the higher authority, without which the Solicitor to the lottery acknowledged he could not act.

Mr. Chancellor PITT demanded, if in the links of this chain, Mr. Lambton had any one public officer in his eye, on whom he could in the first instance fix the charge.

Mr. LAMBTON said, he had communicated the circumstances frankly. He did not think himself justified to name any person in the first instance. The very purport of a Committee was to bring forth and fix the charge. If they had all the proofs ready made, there would be no need of inquiry—they would be moved for punishment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL, after having expressed his surprise at what he had heard that day, declared the sum Hoskins had given bail to, was neither more nor less than an action of debt sued out by Mr. Frost, the Solicitor of the

Lottery, as a mere individual. Had it been any thing in which Government was in any way concerned, Mr. Frost would have been bound in duty to have consulted him as to the bail; but that had not been the case. Mr. Frost, he said, on his own accord, had brought actions against different persons, on the Lottery acts, for the recovery of penalties to the amount of 8 or 9000*l.*, merely to make out a charge upon the Stamp Office of 2000*l.* for what he had done, which was the recovering about 150*l.* On the occasion of Hoskins, Mr. Frost had not insulted him, by offering sham bail to his consideration, or he should not have done it with impunity. In fact, in the particular instance, he had acted as a mere individual. He explained to the House, that actions for penalties, as the law stood at present, could be brought by any individual who chose it, and that the consequence was, they were compromised in the most scandalous manner repeatedly, and that he not being in possession of the evidence, could not effectually interfere. The only way to prevent this, would be to enact in future, that no action for a penalty should be brought but by the Attorney General. The Judges, he said, had done him the honour to consult him on the subject, and had complained of the frequency of the compromises. The Attorney General repeated, that Hoskins was imprisoned on an action of debt to Frost as a mere individual, and declared, that he did not know one case in which he had received a scrap of paper from Frost. He reasoned upon the item of the three guineas charged by Frost to Lord Hood, and said, so far from its affording any proof that persons high in office had been guilty of corrupt practices, it almost to a demonstration proved the contrary. The grounds that had been laid down were far too slight for the House to go into a Committee upon, and they ought not to go into a Committee, unless they were pretty sure of success.

Mr. THOMPSON said, he had brought the matter before the House, in the conviction that if they appointed a Committee, they would find guilt, and find a criminal. They were now called upon expressly to name the criminal. He had not been backward in pointing to one gentleman, against whom suspicion lay in so gross a manner, as to make it necessary to his character, to the dignity of the House, and to the purity of representation, that they should at least inquire. He

had stated some circumstances—they had already heard the effect which the short discussion had had on the memory of the Secretary to the Treasury; he had already called to recollection several circumstances which he had at first forgot, and he pledged himself to bring many others forth, which it would be equally impossible for the honourable gentleman to avoid remembering.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, if the honourable gentlemen on the other side would content themselves with the deliverance which flying from trial would give them, he wished them much honour of their acquittal. The Public would decide on the purity of those who durst not stand trial. The facts alleged against them were as specific as it was possible to make them, in the present stage of the business. It was directly charged upon the Solicitor of the Lottery, and the auspices under which he acted, that he had suffered an accused person to escape by sham and Jew bail, because he had engaged to bring sixty votes in favour of a Lord of the Admiralty. It was expressly charged upon the Secretary of the Treasury, that he had engaged to bring a person, convicted of a penalty for an offence against the Excise laws, to a private conference with the Solicitor to the Excise, in his own house, on his promising to perform certain services in the said election. These were specific charges, and yet it was objected that there was too much generality in the accusation. At a time when the imputations against the Secretary of the Treasury for meddling in elections, were so round, the delicacy of that House alone was not to be offended by whispering an insinuation. Did they really think he was not active in his interferences? Did they not know how various, how multiform, his appearances were, whenever he could be seen or felt with effect? He called upon the House therefore to stand forward, and vindicate themselves, by searching to the bottom a charge fairly and candidly brought before them.

Mr. YORKE said, he saw no sufficient ground in the charge to induce the House to go into the inquiry. It was not for the dignity of the House to commit themselves upon every loose accusation which might be brought before them. He had observed of late much unqualified and unparliamentary insinuation thrown out against the majority of that House.

He thought such insinuations against the principles of the gentlemen with whom he had the honour to act, highly unwarrantable. He believed that they all acted on the most honourable motives. There had been much said on the subject of confidence. He would say for himself, that he gave to the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) what he thought he deserved, a liberal and wise confidence. He was equally ready to say of the right honourable gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Fox), that he had implicit confidence in his honour and integrity, as he had the highest reverence for his political genius and talents; but he could not conceal that he had two or three friends around him who never would enjoy his confidence.

Mr. FOX said, that the honourable gentleman who complained of the unparliamentary language held of late, had sat down with the most disorderly sentence that he had ever heard; for turning to particular persons, he had directed a personality to them of the most unjustifiable nature.

Mr. YORKE said, that if he had offended the rules of the House, he respectfully asked pardon. Certainly he had not included the right honourable gentleman in the number of those who did not possess his confidence.

Mr. WHITBREAD returned to the question. He said, the accusation was as specific as, in the present stage, it ought to be. His honourable friend ought not, in his mind, to name the person high in office against whom his proofs lay—his naming him now might deprive him of those very proofs. Let the right honourable gentleman, for instance, reflect what ought to be his conduct if he himself were the high person alluded to. He had the complete power, by his eloquence, by his influence, to grant or to stifle inquiry, as he should find that the proofs were feeble, or that they were conclusive. If he made it a previous doctrine, therefore, that the person should be named, and that all the chain of proof should be exposed, he crushed all inquiry against a Minister pending his power, and against all his subordinate officers. The dignity—the feelings of gentlemen in office, demanded that they should be the first to entreat the House to grant the inquiry. Not to be forward in soliciting it themselves would be to give suspicion of guilt—innocence would be eager for justification—it could not sleep under accusation—"Go," it would say to its friends, "re-

“ lieve me from the torture of suspicion. I have lost my rest ;
“ I cannot sleep till I am justified.” What sort of friendship must that be, which, instead of eagerly bringing the accuser to his proofs, forbids all inquiry, and dooms innocence “ to sleep “ no more !” It was not to be imagined that His Majesty’s Ministers could persist in shrinking from the only legitimate means which they had of an honourable acquittal.

Mr. Serjeant WATSON said, he came down in the disposition to vote for the inquiry, because he thought that a charge made against a person or persons, for corrupt interference in elections ought to be inquired into ; but the charge had too much generality, and the arguments against it had made him change his mind.

Mr. WINDAM said, that the very unaccountable language of that day induced him to rise, not because he thought it possible to adduce any new arguments in support of the motion, but because to be silent under the doctrines which had been advanced, would be to desert his duty, and to prostitute his feelings. The doctrines had themselves been strange—they had been more strange from the quarter whence they had originated. They militated against every principle of jurisprudence which the wisdom of ages had matured, or which the practice of all our Courts had sanctioned—and yet they were brought forward by lawyers. A conduct had been held by His Majesty’s Ministers, which certainly did not greatly tend to the elevation of the House—and which he knew not how they could reconcile with their own dignity. They had recourse to a scrupulous nicety, under which a man of honour, charged with the suspicion of guilt, would have disdained to shelter himself, a mere verbal insufficiency, and taking refuge in the desperate practice of self-convicted and timorous offenders in our criminal Courts, they had literally got off by a flaw in the indictment. They said, “ it is necessary that you shall name the person high in office whom you charge, and unless you specify the offender, you shall not be permitted to inquire, although you assert that there is positive guilt.”—“ Why, Sir,” said Mr. Windham, “ even taking it with this captious objection, their scruple ought to be removed, when the honourable gentleman (Mr. Thompson) fairly tells you, that the Secretary of the Treasury is personally charged. Is not the Secretary of the Treasury a

public man in high authority? Is he not a great man by his salaries? Is he not a public man by his trusts and offices?—View him in all his aspects—he is every way a public man—and he is personally accused. But the learned gentleman asserts it as a legal doctrine, that there ought not to be an inquiry unless there is a great and infinite probability of guilt. Is this, Sir, the practice of any one Court in England? There ought not to be a trial, I admit, without a certain degree suspicion; but there ought to be an inquiry wherever there is a charge, and wherever there is an open and avowed accuser. A man ought not to be brought before a jury of his Peers to answer to a frivolous and vexatious charge, but will you say that the grand jury shall not examine the bill? To deny an inquiry is to bar the door against justice. It is contrary to the first principles of jurisprudence. It is what a band of criminals would rejoice in, but it would be fatal to innocence. We state that there is positive guilt—we have the record of positive guilt. We have the proof that a public officer suffered a person, accused of an offence against law, to escape, for a corrupt reason, offensive to the dignity of this House, outrageous to the representation of the people: and we have it presented to us, that he did this with the connivance of higher persons. We demand that this bill be examined. We demand that the House shall go into a Committee, to see whether persons in office did, or did not, convert the public revenue into an instrument of election abuse. Granting a Committee is not going to trial; but if you say, that you ought not to inquire, when abuse is stated, you lay down a principle unknown in any Court in the world! You say, in so many words at least, that the English House of Commons shall establish for its own conduct a doctrine to screen guilt and to torture innocence. Another doctrine, advanced by the learned gentleman, is certainly equally against his own practice in the Courts. “There ought to be proof “that the witnesses are credible.” Why, Sir, was it ever heard of that the credibility of the witnesses became a question, till they came to give their evidence? till it was seen what stress was to be laid on their testimony? This new way of taking character by anticipation is a doctrine so new and so contrary to all practice, that I confess it astonishes me to hear it advanced; and against all this we have the assertion of the gentlemen

themselves. “ I assure you,” say they, “ these witnesses are “ not deserving of credibility—trust us, the accused persons; “ we assure you of our innocence—and here let there be an “ end.” Sir, they must surely entertain a higher opinion of the credulity of this House, than even their recent experience can justify, if they think that their confiding talent will be carried to this length. But if it is, then the majority will, upon reflection, see the true picture of their own conduct—they will see whether the imputations that have been thrown upon them, of giving confidence for reasons which they have never been so good as to explain, are not fairly to be ascribed to them. They will do more—this Administration, which it has been their fashion to paint, without, however, having any proofs to exhibit—certainly without any instances of purity, which they please to advance, as a perfect paragon of purity and virtue, will now stand unmasked and exposed in their natural and true colours. The gay embroidered suit of pretence, in which they have decked themselves, and under which they have strutted in magnificent disguise, is torn off, and they behold them in the tattered rags of their genuine deformity. They stand like the uncased Frenchman, which the licentiousness of our stage is too apt to exhibit in ridicule—in ruffles without a shirt—in tinsel and lace on the outside—in dirt and dowlas within—they stand before their confiding majority, convicted of shrinking from trial, and when a man does not dare to stand trial, the world have a right to believe him guilty—and in this condition, stands His Majesty’s Ministers in the eyes of their majority. Let me add, Sir, one word more on this serious subject. We have before us two pregnant instances of the use which is made of these summary and shameful proceedings, which are introduced into practice for the sake of our darling revenue—that revenue for which every thing is to be sacrificed—the citizen to be oppressed and ruined—the constitution to be violated. We see that these summary modes of conviction may be dexterously perverted into instruments of favour or of fear, as it may be the political and corrupt motive of office, for the moment, to gratify or to intimidate. You see the fact in glaring truth before you—It remains for you to shew to your constituents, suffering under these abominable laws, whether you will not at least

provide against the profligate perversion of them to other ends than revenue.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he must, though he had spoken so often, yet rise to justify himself against the inflammatory expressions of the honourable gentleman. If it was consistent with order for himself to do this, and which he thought he might do by simply explaining the line of conduct which he and his friends had taken in the debate, he would confine himself to a very few words. They had objected to inquiry, because no precise charge had been made against any person high in office, and because no man would state and pledge himself that it would come home directly to an individual.

Mr. WINDHAM said, he should indeed have misrepresented the arguments of the gentlemen on the other side the House, if he had stated them to be different from what the right honourable gentleman had himself described them to have been in the explanation he had just given. That was exactly as he had understood them.

Mr. MARTIN said, that though he was of opinion that an inquiry ought to be granted, and even that if the motion were rejected, eternal disgrace would fall on the House; yet he hoped it would be rejected, as such a circumstance could not fail to open the eyes of the Public to the imperfections of the present system of representation, and convince them of the necessity of a parliamentary reform.

The House divided,

Ayes, 84; Noes, 221.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 14th March.

Mr. BURTON gave notice that on Friday next he should bring forward a motion for leave to bring in a bill for the regulation of the office of Justice of the Peace, for so much of the county of Middlesex as laid in or near the metropolis.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 15th March.

Mr. HIPPISEY said, that it was his intention to have submitted to the House some resolutions on the correspondence

of Sir Archibald Campbell with Major Bannerman, previous to Major Maitland's motions ; but as he understood from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the discussion might go to length, he gave notice, that he should bring it on next Monday se'nnight, being the first open day.

General SMITH also gave notice that whenever the subject of the Charter of the Company should be brought forward, it was his intention to move a Committee for a more extensive inquiry relative to the affairs of the Company, than that of which his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox) had given notice on a former day of his intention to move.

Major MAITLAND said, that before he submitted to the House his sentiments on the subject, of which he had given notice, he wished to make an observation or two on the conduct of gentlemen who defended the war in India, particularly the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) who brought forward his resolutions on that subject, approving of the war in question, and of the conduct of Lord Cornwallis with regard to it. Feeling now, as he felt at first, on this subject, that the war was founded on injustice and impolicy, he had some reason to complain of the manner in which those who thought differently from him, had thought fit to conduct themselves on the occasion. When this war was discussed before, they had contrived to blend the measure and the character of the man together, and from that mode had contrived to insinuate, that those who maintained the injustice and the impolicy of that war, cast illiberal aspersions on the character of a brave and able officer, who was absent ; and consequently that they themselves, who complained of injustice in the war, were unjust. The right honourable gentleman on that occasion had said, " Direct your shafts of attack at those who are here to answer you. I will take upon myself the whole blame, if any blame be due, for the system adopted in India by Lord Cornwallis." He thanked him for the invitation to hostilities, and accepted his challenge, but as he disclaimed all personality himself, and as he had already protested against the injustice of blending measures with men, for the purpose of confounding objects, and while a Member of that House was doing his duty to his country, to hold him out as a calumniator and detractor, he hoped he should have no more reason to com-

plain of harsh epithets on this occasion. Having said this, he trusted he should be able to prove, and make out to the satisfaction of the House, that this war was founded upon bad policy—that it has been carried on by robbery—that it would end in the ruin of our territories in India, and finally bring disgrace and contempt on the British name in India. On these impressions he had formed some resolutions, which he should presently submit to the judgement of the House. They were founded on the sentiments and words of Lord Cornwallis himself, and such as could not, in his opinion, be denied by those who said they agreed with that noble Lord; he hoped, therefore, that those gentlemen who had been so liberal of their praises on that Commander, would second his sentiments and opinion by action as well as by words.

The first point to which he should call the attention of the House was, the letter of Lord Cornwallis to the Nizam, dated the 7th of July 1789, which the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) had been pleased to style a great piece of wisdom, but which he called a piece of diplomatic deception, folly, and disgrace. The second point on which he should in-treat the attention of the House, was the object in view, on sending our military force to the Travancore country. The third was, the state of our resources and revenue in India. And lastly, the effect which the whole would have on the British territories, and name in India; and on the interests of this country. He entered into a history of our affairs in that part of the globe, since the treaty of 1768. The whole of our policy there was founded on the iniquitous and disgraceful principles and practice of that man, who was about to be called upon to make some expiation for the mischief which he had done. Indeed, this policy was so unwise, so unjust, so base, so detestable, that even the utmost success of the plan laid down would be attended with ruin to our affairs in India. Supposing the utmost extent of success, the taking of Srirangapatnam, and the extirpation of Tippoo Sultan, to be the result of the war, even then ruin would be the effect—immediate ruin to the Myfore country, and ultimately ruin to this. He maintained, that it appeared clearly from the whole of the correspondence on the table, and of the conduct of Lord Cornwallis, Tippoo Sultan had a right to suspect the intentions of the

English, and that they would take the first opportunity they could to attack him. Captain Bannerman was sent to Iacottah not only without the request, without the wish, but possibly even contrary to the inclination of the Rajah of Travancore, for the purpose of exciting the alarms of Tippoo Sultan, and to induce him to commence the attack for his own safety, that we might have an apology for attacking him under pretence of supporting the interest of our ally. Could any thing be more infamous than this? First to alarm Tippoo by possessing a post which is capable of being converted into a place of attack on him, and inducing him, for his own safety, to make an attack, and to take that post, as a place for his own defence, and then to say, "He has commenced hostilities upon our ally—we must revenge the insult—the British name is pledged on the faith of our treaty—his capital must be taken—he must himself be extirpated, in order that peace may be secured to India!" These were the means by which we sought to cover that infamous thirst for dominion, which was the disgrace of the British name, and would ultimately effect its ruin!

When he came to our resources, the expence of this war naturally occurred; and he sincerely hoped that the annual predictions of the right honourable gentleman of the immense wealth that would flow from India to us, might be realized on some happy and some early day, but he had great fear that day would never come, but that, if we believed these tales, we should wait for wealth until the arrival of ruin. Upon this subject, the expressions of Lord Cornwallis himself were, that the resources of the Company are so exhausted, that they are not adequate to the expence of a protracted war. How are the expences to be defrayed?—By seizing the territories of our ally, for whose interest, we meanly pretended, we commenced the war; when, in fact, it was with a view of destroying another power. This was pursuing our own aggrandizement with a vengeance! We ruined one country, for the sake of carrying on war with another! He had heard of many sorts of robbery and plunder, but this was the first instance where an attack was made upon an enemy for the purpose of robbing a friend—nor could he see the reason why we should wish to take the contest up, before an appeal was made to us; or how we came to know more of the affairs of others, than they did themselves. The

motive too, for which this war was undertaken, had been changed. The first cause of it was to revenge the insult given to our ally, which, by the way, was occasioned by ourselves; but now it was different—it was to obtain compensation for charges incurred, and losses sustained. Compensation there might be to the Mahrattas—to the Nizam—to the English—but what compensation was there to the Nabob of Arcot? He was to be ruined. This was the foulest injustice that ever disgraced the character of any country. We should leave Tippoo and the Nabob of Arcot beggars. What then? What benefit to ourselves? Nothing but disgrace. This was the wise policy which the right honourable gentleman was pleased to praise so highly by the resolutions he brought forward on that subject, and such was the wealth that was to flow from India into this country.

As to the state of the war he maintained, that now it was a procrastinated one: it could not be viewed in any other light, since the avowed purpose for which it was commenced, was now changed, and with respect to its continuance the prospect was indeed very dreary. We should not have even the same means as we had last year to carry it on. We should want provisions, and we should meet with many difficulties of which gentlemen in this country had no idea. An examination of local circumstances, would shew the prodigious disadvantages to which we are exposed in the course of this war. He took notice of many parts of the correspondence, and particularly the letter of Lord Cornwallis to the Nizam, dated the 7th of July, 1789, which amounted, he maintained, to all intents and purposes to a treaty, but which the whole state of our political interest in India was altered, and from which proceeded the whole of the calamities which this country is doomed ultimately to suffer from this war.

The effect of the war, he maintained, even supposing us to succeed, would be, that other powers, seeing that restless ambition by which we were continually led to increase our dominion, our treachery in friendship, our insolence in success, would apply to France for alliance; and if that alliance was formed, our interest in that part of the world would soon be at an end.

He concluded with moving, " That a negociation between
 " the British Government and the Nizam, tending to deprive
 " Tippoo of any part of his possessions, unprovoked on his
 " part, must naturally create suspicions in his mind unfavour-
 " able to the reputation of the Nizam, and the character of
 " the British Government in India."

" That the letter of Earl Cornwallis to the Nizam had in
 " view the carrying into full effect the treaty of 1768 between
 " the Nizam and the Company, by the 10th article of which
 " the Company were to be put into possession of great part of
 " the Myfore dominions, paying a peshcush to the Nizam,
 " and by the 11th article of which the Company engage to pay
 " regularly, and annually, the usual choute to the Mahrattas,
 " provided the Mahrattas guarantee to them the possession of
 " those dominions, but the execution of which treaty had
 " been unclaimed for upwards of twenty years."

" That it appears, from the Military Consultations, 12th
 " August, 1788, that the object which the Madras Govern-
 " ment had in view, by sending a military force to the Tra-
 " vancore country, was to have them stationed in the place
 " from whence they could, with the greatest ease and expen-
 " diture, invade Tippoo's dominions."

" That it appears that the resources of Bengal, even at the
 " beginning of the present war, were so exhausted, by various
 " drains, through a long series of successive years, as to be
 " perfectly incompetent to support the expences of a war, for
 " any length of time, without being reduced to the greatest
 " extremity of distress, and that, by the length of the war,
 " that distress has already taken place."

Mr. GREY seconded the motions.

Mr. POWYS said, that the strong prejudices that had so
 deeply entered into his mind against the whole of our system
 in India, had disgusted him so much, that he never of late
 years took a view of Indian subjects, except when he found
 them connected with the constitutional interests of Great Bri-
 tain. He apprehended, from what he had heard to-night, that
 Lord Cornwallis was the sole object of those resolutions. It
 was imputed to that noble Lord, that he had views different
 from the former purposes for which the war was commenced.
 That noble Lord had hitherto the character of a person of plain,

direct, sincere views. When it was imputed to such a man, that he is engaged in a system of fraud and duplicity, of crooked indirect policy, he owned he wished to examine the evidence on which such an accusation was founded, and therefore he had read the papers brought forward. He had looked into the evidence referred to; he had considered them with much attention, and could not help drawing conclusions diametrically opposite to those drawn by the honourable gentleman. He begged leave, when he said this, to protest against the principle of our system in India; he was only speaking of the conduct of Lord Cornwallis in the course of this war. He thought that every drop of blood that was spilt, every shilling that was spent in India, was totally a loss to this country, without having afforded us in return even so much as a distant hope or prospect of compensation. He agreed, that Lord Cornwallis was responsible for the whole of this measure; if there was any criminality in this case, Lord Cornwallis certainly was the criminal; at least he was the principal, and Government were only accessories after the fact. If the responsibility were to be fixed on Government, he thought he saw ground of exculpation in some parts of their conduct in this affair, and of complete approbation in others. The whole source of our calamity, with respect to India, he attributed to an unpleasant and unavoidable necessity. The first and primary of all the evils to which this country was subject, was our Asiatic dominion, and this would continue to be the case with all Europe, as long as Europe shall continue to rank itself as a possessor of dominion in the East. We should never have any security for the permanency of their system, unless they should be able to inspire all India with views similar to those of Europe. If they projected hostilities against us, it would be in vain that we pretended to say we could, or that we should attempt to secure our possessions in India. There was a spirit in Tippoo to disturb us, and we had not means to prevent him.

It was true that our interference was to avenge an insult on our allies. They were in that character entitled to our protection. Many were the disappointments to which the conductor of a war was subject, but the most bitter of them all, was that of being censured when he might have a right to

claim praise. On former occasions, gentlemen had spoken much against praise by anticipation; they had said, "Wait until you hear of success, before you give your approbation of the conduct of Lord Cornwallis." The same principle taught us that we should not prematurely condemn. He denied, however, that the acquisition of dominion, or the destruction of Tippoo, was now the cause of our continuing the war, but it might be the effect of it. He considered this as a direct charge against Lord Cornwallis; not indeed upon his character, but upon the measures of Lord Cornwallis. He confessed he saw no propriety in the mode of carrying on these resolutions, supposing the charge to be well-founded; for admitting the conduct of Lord Cornwallis to be as censurable as he thought it praise-worthy, then the first step that should be taken would be a motion to recal Lord Cornwallis. If any honourable gentleman thought him unfit to carry on the war in India, he should move, that the House should tell him so, and send for him home, first to hear the accusation, and then make his answer. He saw many grounds of objection to the discussing of this question at this time. In the first place, when Lord Cornwallis, or any part of his conduct, was attacked, no person in this country could possibly possess the means of making a proper defence for him. How could any gentleman know the mode in which he had defended Lord Cornwallis would be the mode which he would have defended himself? How could it be ascertained that the ground any gentleman should take in his favour was the ground on which he would have rested his defence? He then took notice of the letter in question, and protested he could not regard it in the light of a treaty, or any thing like a treaty. The person to whom it was addressed, he believed, did not so regard it, and he was not desirous of viewing it with a more piercing, or scrutinizing eye, than the person to whom it was written. He took notice also of other observations made on the opening of this subject, and saw no reason whatever to agree with any of them: after urging his several objections, he concluded with saying, that he felt himself, from a view of the observations of the honourable gentleman, and the resolutions he recommended to the House, bound to give a distinct negative to them all.

Major MAITLAND observed, that notwithstanding the high character of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, he could not help regarding his opposition in this subject with less dread, as he had confessed he seldom read any documents which relate to our affairs in India; had he given himself the trouble of reading the letter to the end—

The SPEAKER observed, that in cases like the present, a reply was an indulgence which the House seldom withheld from an honourable Member who made a motion; but he wished the honourable gentleman to observe, that if he proceeded now, he would waive the privilege of his reply.

Major MAITLAND said, a few words in explanation, as did also Mr. Powys.

Lord MORNINGTON said, he must rise to oppose the resolutions moved by the honourable gentleman, from a recollection of what had passed last session on the war in India; it had then undergone a full and fair discussion, when resolutions similar to the present had been brought forward; they had then been negatived, and the House had thought proper not only to refuse those resolutions, but to adopt a counter declaration, which was entered upon their journals; this declaration stated the approbation of the House, both as to the origin and conduct of the war, and he could not think that the solemn decision of last year was intended to remain a dead letter on their journals, but on the contrary, was meant to carry information to India that the House and the country were satisfied with the conduct of the war. In all that had been said to-night there was nothing like new ground stated, and until there was, he saw no reason to alter the opinions agreed to last year. He said, there were two propositions, which he expected to have heard argued, before the honourable gentleman had moved his string of resolutions; the first was, that the origin of the war proceeded from the hostile disposition of this country towards Tippoo Sultan, a point which no pains had been taken to make out, and which no evidence that had yet been brought forward was competent to prove; and the other was, that some event had occurred in the progress of the war, that shewed the impolicy and injustice of continuing it. But neither in the former discussions, nor in all that had been said to-night, notwithstanding the many observations on the letter of Lord Cornwall-

lis to the Nizam, 7th of July 1789, did there appear to him any new ground of argument, or any proof to establish the hostile system so much complained of—though much had also been said about breach of treaties; no one breach of a treaty had been brought home; either to the Governors in India, or the Government at home. Our negotiations in India shewed no hostile intention against Tippoo: and in speaking of the treaty of 1768, gentlemen had forgotten that Lord Cornwallis did not act upon any of the three last articles of that treaty. He contended that his Lordship's conduct merited the thanks, instead of the censure of his country, and that the papers on the table proved, that he had acted agreeable to existing laws, and the circumstances at the time. Our interference was justified by a fair construction of the 6th article of the treaty, which he thought was merely defensive; and as to the measures that had been followed since, they had his approbation, and as he thought it proper to judge of public men by the whole tenor of their public conduct; and as he could see nothing like a hostile system in any thing that had been done, he thought they merited much from the candour and wisdom of the House. He said, from the papers on the table might be collected not only the necessity of our avenging an insult and outrage committed against our ally, the Rajah of Travancore, but likewise our reluctance, after all, in going to war with Tippoo. This Tippoo knew as well as they did, and as to any terms of peace being proposed, or what they were, he could not argue upon them, because he did not know of any. We had already decided that the war was just in its origin, and if so, it must be just in its continuance, till the object of it is accomplished. In all probability, another campaign has ended the war, for it was not likely that Lord Cornwallis would have the same difficulties to encounter, that prevented his complete success in the last. The Nizam's troops had joined him. It was not probable that the monsoons would come on a month sooner than the usual time as last year, and our general situation was as much in our favour, as it was against Tippoo. He was surrounded in a narrow country, and deprived of all relief and assistance from any other; had we not, therefore, reason to look forward with the hopes of a speedy termination to the war, and though the spirit of the country was not easily dejected, was it not highly

improper in that House to depreciate our successes, and calumniate our victories. He stated what he thought might be the consequence of the accounts arriving in India, that the conduct of the army and government there was rather censured than approved in that House; the necessary consequences of voting such resolutions, would only be to shake the faith of their allies, to encourage their enemies, and to discourage their friends. If it should happen that the resolutions arrived in India, immediately after a glorious and successful campaign, what a mortification would they prove to their General? And what could be a greater satisfaction to him on his return home, than to find that his conduct had been honoured with the approbation of the House of Commons. But if the resolutions were voted, would he then meet the honours of a triumph on his return to England? No. The resolutions of the honourable gentleman, though couched in respectful terms, were most weighty charges, and most mortifying, and disgraceful imputations of censure. His Lordship after farther argument, concluded by saying, that if peace, as was extremely probable, was by this time effected, the motions were nugatory; and if peace was not effected, they might be pernicious. He therefore would give them his negative, unless amended so as to express a different sense.

General SMITH argued against the motion. The General contended, that there was nothing offensive in the noble Lord's letter. That the conduct of Tippoo had been, from his accession to the Mysore government, evidently marked with a rooted hatred to the British; and that for the last four years, his views and his acts had been uniformly hostile: he wished gentlemen to recollect the embassy to France, where, as was generally known, a treaty had been agitated for the extirpation of the British from India. Immediately after Tippoo's Ambassadors left the Court of Versailles, Pondicherry was ordered to be evacuated. The Rajah of Travancore, he could say, from an experience of forty years, had never attempted to pass his lines. The General said, he considered the attack made by Tippoo on the Travancore lines, to have been a fortunate circumstance for this country; for in a very short time, by the works he was carrying on, but which he had not finished, he would not only have been an overmatch for us, but for the

formidable league by which he was now borne down. The conduct of Lord Cornwallis, in commencing the war on account of this attack, he thought not only to be just, but a master-piece of policy ; and so far from being ready to censure his Lordship, by agreeing to the motions before the House, he said he was ready to declare, that there did not appear in the whole of his Lordship's conduct in India a single act derogatory to the good faith, to the honour, or the dignity of his country. The General said he had been the first British officer that entered the Myfore country ; that Tippoo was now almost surrounded by our forces, and those of our allies ; and that he had scarcely a prospect of success. He concluded by saying, that he trusted and believed, from respectable authority, that Seringapatam had been in possession of the British arms upwards of two months.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER said, if characters were to be introduced into such discussion, when measures were the objects of inquiry, no right would be left to the House either to investigate conduct, or to condemn measures. If the war proceeded from a hostile system, if it was unjust in its origin, it must be equally so in its continuance and result ; and if it militated against the British interests in India and at home, all which he believed to be the case, his honourable friend's resolutions were not in any point of view nugatory ; and how they could be pernicious, no one reason had been assigned. He stated, that the absurdity and impropriety of our conduct had shaken all faith in our alliances, and recurred to the two last Gazettes of the right honourable gentleman at the head of the Board of Control, from which he drew such inferences as warranted him to call those very Gazettes a libel on our Indian allies ; as to the Nizam, were we not told there that he was a knave, and a coward, and had acted to us as such ; and did we not know, that the sole intent of his giving us assistance, was to share in the plunder which our unjust depredations might obtain. He contended, in reply to the noble Lord, that we had certainly pursued an hostile system, and that all our views had been the extension of territory, and acquisition of plunder ; although it had long since been agreed on all hands, that this was the most improper cause for war. As to the Rajah of Travancore, it seemed to be the opinion, that if he

chose to support the Dutch in the possession of those forts, we were bound to support him. And pray, what does Tippoo ask? Nothing, but that those forts may be restored to their proper owners; he never wished to have them, in order to increase his own power, but merely that things might remain just as they were. Gentlemen who had argued thus contented themselves with the bare right which the Dutch had to sell, and the Rajah to buy, those forts. But he would ask, if Great Britain was to sell Gibraltar, whether it could be supposed a matter of indifference to Spain? besides, Tippoo had claims upon those forts, which still remain unsettled; although those claims had been established, and it had been allowed that they had been at different periods tributary to him, a circumstance which they seemed to think not worth inquiry; this was just the same as if one man was to sell an estate to another, without either telling that it was liable to any debts, or allowing the least inquiry to be made about their amount.— It had been stated that the cause of the war arose from Tippoo having attacked our ally. If so, was it not sufficient that he denied that attack, and offered to refer to arbitration his claims upon the Rajah of Travancore? In short, there was neither moderation nor justice in our system; our only views seemed to be ambition and rapine, which we were encouraged to persist in, upon a supposition of our superior power and strength. As to the article which made the treaty a partition treaty, it ought to have been struck out: the law of nations entitled him to say, after concluding a peace with any Power, whatever partition treaty might have existed previously, was then virtually put an end to. Would any man in this country justify proceedings upon the partition treaty with France, framed in King William's time? Certainly not; all such treaties had only a tendency to create jealousy, and ought never to be revived; and if Lord Cornwallis had no power to execute such a treaty, why did he, merely that he might secure the Nizam and the Mahrattas? we shall have to give the first for his assistance a peshcush, and to the others their chout. Having argued this point, he came to the treaty of 1790, which, he thought, to all intents and purposes an offensive one, and formed upon the system of *catch who catch can*. He then adverted to our treaty of 1788 with the Nabob of the Carnatic, and stated

the absurdity of our situation: there we could not go to war with Tippoo without breaking our treaty with that Prince, and this was the pure, simple, moderate system; and all that was said on this head was, that we had made an absurd treaty, and must break it, because we were bunglers in making it. The usury and rapacity of our servants in the Carnatic was given as a reason for seizing upon the country from the Nabob, in the same manner as if they were now desired to frame a law against usury in this country, they were to answer, No—let us take the estates of those that are sufferers into our own hands, and then they will have nothing to complain of. This was exactly the case; and surely so absurd a mode of reasoning could never be allowed to justify a system of rapacity and injustice; nay rather placed in a more flagrant point of view that conduct which it was brought to defend.

General SMITH, in explanation, denied that he had said the war was a war of policy.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER explained.

Colonel PHIPPS began with observing, that after having paid a just compliment to his noble friend near him, for his very masterly speech, the honourable gentleman, who had just sat down, had declared, that although it was difficult to equal that speech, it was easy to follow it in reply; but in the course of the honourable gentleman's speaking, he had totally forgot to make good this assertion, not having replied to any one of the many arguments which his noble friend had so forcibly urged. Having made this remark, he proceeded to examine the truth of the positions laid down by Mr. Anstruther, and with regard to the conduct of Tippoo and the Rajah of Travancore previous to the attack made upon the lines of the latter by Tippoo; he said, it reminded him of the old fable which they had all heard of long ago, viz. that of the *Wolf* and the *Lamb*. He enumerated the various and unreasonable demands made one after another on the Rajah by Tippoo, till at the last the Rajah had informed Tippoo, that he would apply to the British Government to desire them to state what line of conduct he ought to pursue in consequence of Tippoo's ultimate requisition; and while this negotiation was in progress, Tippoo had most unjustifiably attacked the Rajah's lines, and had afterwards the effrontery to proclaim the Rajah the aggressor.

With regard to Seringapatam, the Colonel said, Lord Cornwallis would have had a complete victory, but that the elements fought against him. He declared, that he had every reason to believe, that the war would prove successful, and concluded with proposing various amendments to some of the motions, stating at the same time, that he should give a direct negative to such others as could not be amended so as to meet his conception of what ought to stand on their journals on the subject.

The first and second resolutions thus amended were carried. When the third was read,

Mr. Chancellor PITT explained to the House, that the amendments were purposely designed to give the resolutions a directly opposite tendency to their original sense.

Major MAITLAND rose, as soon as the question on Colonel Phipps's amendment on the third resolution was put, to make a few observations on what had been said, in reference to his arguments, in the course of the debate; and first he recurred to the speech of Mr. Powys, declaring that respectable as the character of that gentleman was, he was inclined to consider what had fallen from him that day, as having but little weight, since he had begun with declaring, that whenever Indian questions were to be discussed, he had studiously absented himself from his duty in that House; and that he had only been led to consider, and examine the subject that had been agitated that day, by personal motives, and by his regard for Lord Cornwallis. He had himself, the Major said, as much regard and esteem for the private character and virtues of Lord Cornwallis as any man, but in the opening of his speech he had particularly guarded against the misconstruction of applying what he should say relative to the public conduct of Lord Cornwallis to his personal character. It was the measures that noble Lord had pursued relative to the war in India, and nothing else, that he had arraigned; and thus far, he conceived, every Member of that House was at liberty to consider them in the light in which they appeared to himself. He reminded the House that on a former occasion he had complained of the want of consistency in the scheme of the war; the sentiments on that subject, which he then professed, he declared, he still entertained. They would recollect, that we had carried on

the war in India for two campaigns, up to the period of our last advices. In the first campaign General Meadows had marched the army into the Coimbatore country, and taken possession of it; whereas when Lord Cornwallis came down from Bengal, instead of looking to the object that General Meadows had looked to, instead of going to Coimbatore, and carrying on the war according to the obvious intention of General Meadows, he ordered the army back to the very spot it had set out from in the Carnatic, and carried on the war in another quarter, penetrating the Mysore country, and proceeding upon an entire new scheme. Major Maitland commented on that part of Lord Cornwallis's letter which stated that the Nizam's troops had fallen upon his line, and interrupted his progress. He had a letter from the officer who ought best to know the fact, that the Nizam's troops behaved with the most perfect propriety; that they did not break in upon Lord Cornwallis's line, but that his Lordship himself suddenly halted, and thus occasioned some little confusion. With regard to Lord Cornwallis's failure at Seringapatam, it had not been owing to the sudden setting in of the Monsoon, as had been stated, but to a very different cause, the want of provisions; and it was, he said, a disgrace to the British arms, that the troops under Lord Cornwallis should have suffered so much from famine, which prevailed, according to all accounts, to a dreadful degree amidst our army, when the last dispatches came from India. The Major took notice of Captain Bannerman's letter, and said, it was not evident that our troops had marched into the Travancore country, with the consent, much less with the concurrence of the Rajah, and it was rather probable that they had not. The Major spoke of the ruin of our affairs in India, and said, he had Lord Cornwallis's own authority for the declaration, since his Lordship had expressly stated in his letter home, that he should push for Seringapatam, because he foresaw that the procrastination of the war would aggravate the expences of it so enormously, as to prove ruinous to the Company's affairs in India.

Mr. PYBUS rose to take notice of what had fallen from Major Maitland, relative to Captain Bannerman's letter, and to speak to the origin of the war. He observed that the war had been provoked by Tippoo, who, although he knew the Rajah

of Travancore had sent an application to Madras, to consult the English Government how he should act in consequence of some demands made upon him by Tippoo, would not wait for the answer, but even before the application could have reached Maliras, attacked the Rajah's lines. With regard to our troops having entered the Travancore country, it was a matter of notoriety that they entered it with the Rajah's full consent, and at his express requisition.

Major MAITLAND in reply said, he should rather think our troops entered the Travancore country without the Rajah's consent, because Captain Bannerman dated his letter from a Dutch settlement.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, so little of new argument had been advanced, and the greater part of the topics touched on by the honourable Major had been so ably and so fully replied to by his noble friend behind him, and by other honourable friends of his, that the House, he was persuaded, would have reason to be dissatisfied if he were to enter into any long consideration of the subject. He would therefore only make a few observations on particular points not sufficiently explained, and indeed what had principally called him up, was what had fallen from the honourable gentleman in his reply, relative to the campaign of General Meadows, and the blame which the honourable gentleman had thought proper to cast on that able and absent officer. He was perfectly aware, that he was not competent to discuss the merits of a campaign with the honourable gentleman over the way; men like himself, who had not been bred to the military profession, in discussing a subject of that sort, must rest on authority; but thus far common sense, and fair construction, enabled him, as well as any other man, to form an opinion of the general effect of a campaign, however ill qualified he, or any other man uninformed of military matters, might be, to discuss the propriety or impropriety of the particular movements and marches that had taken place in the course of it. He made no scruple, on this ground, to declare that he attributed much of the successes of Lord Cornwallis to the previous campaign of General Meadows. In that campaign, General Meadows got possession of the whole of the Coimbatore country, a country as rich and fertile as any one district in India.

By possessing ourselves of the Coimbatore country, we had obtained possession of all the strong-holds and granaries which had heretofore proved of such infinite importance to Tippoo Sultan. A better proof of its importance to Tippoo need not be given, than the circumstance, that distressed as he was, he had made a bold attempt to obtain a repossession of Coimbatore. He did not contend that the campaign of General Meadows was warranted one way or the other, but he must contend that Lord Cornwallis, in taking a different road, did not mean any censure of General Meadows. The latter, he was persuaded, had not conceived offence, as if by departing from his place, any imputation had been intended upon himself, but shewed a greater and a nobler mind in applauding Lord Cornwallis. The language of General Meadows was, "I was pleased with my own campaign; I am pleased likewise with the campaign of Lord Cornwallis." There was nothing extraordinary, the two campaigns being made under different circumstances, that they should be marked with different features. He desired however that no invidious attempt might be made to create a difference between such gallant and deserving officers as Lord Cornwallis and General Meadows. He took notice of Mr. Anstruther's declaration that we wished to establish a system of military despotism in India. When the honourable gentleman talked of a system of military despotism; he wished he had given some definition of the words, so as to have enabled the House clearly to understand his meaning. For his part, the only construction he could affix to the words military despotism, was when a country was governed by martial law. Was that the case in India? No such thing; they had established a regular system of justice, to protect every rank of people in their rights; and the internal prosperity of the country was a proof that a very different system of Government prevailed there. What regulation was there, he would gladly know, that could add to the security and happiness of the people of India which they had neglected to apply to that country? If there was a system of military despotism, it was a most mysterious system,

a perfect secret, a sort of doing that with the right hand of which the left knew nothing. With regard to the system of the British Government in India, he must once more repeat what he had said again and again, that it was a system of peace in which the utmost care was observed to avoid any thing like an attack upon any of the Princes in India our neighbours; a determined resolution to abstain from aiming at objects of aggrandizement and ambition, and a strict attention to add to the comforts of the people, and promote the prosperity of the country. That such was our system, the Princes of India well knew, and they also knew, that it had been steadily adhered to, from the time that the resolution to that effect was voted by the House, on which resolution the act of Parliament was grounded, that was passed to give the resolution the weight, authority, and efficacy of law. At the same time, that we determined to preserve peace in India, we were not debarred, he said, from taking up arms in defence of our allies, whenever our allies were attacked.

Upon that principle, and no other, was the present war commenced. He spoke of the use Major Maitland had made of some of the papers, which he said had been moved for by another gentleman, and for a very different purpose; perhaps from motives of gallantry and politeness. He said, the Major ought to have opened his intentions as to those papers to the House, that gentlemen might have been enabled to consider them in that point of view, and that before he left the House that night, he would move for other papers which would bring that part of the subject fully before the House. With regard to the taking the country of Arcot and Tanjore from under the Government of the Nabob of Arcot and the Rajah of Tanjore, he said, he was ready at that moment or any other, to enter into a full discussion of the measure, professing himself as he did, and ever had done, to be responsible for every thing done in India, as far as related to General Meadows and Lord Cornwallis. With regard to the expences of the war, the honourable Major, he observed, had declared we were ruined in India. If we

were ruined, we were idly employed indeed in carrying on a war, when the object of it was already gone. But the calculation of the honourable gentleman as to the expences of the war, were extravagant and absurd to the last degree. It was impossible for him at that time to speak particularly as to the expences of the war, but he had no scruple to declare, that he thought there was nothing in the affairs of India that should give the least alarm to that House. Certain he was that the amount of the expence hitherto was but a trifle, compared to the ideas formed of it in this country, and that fact he deduced, not only from the best public information sent over from India, but also from the Company's dispatches and his own letters. Nay, a stronger proof need not be desired, than Sir Charles Oakley having written over word, that when Lord Cornwallis on his return to Bangalore, wrote to the Government of Madras, for a sum of money to refit his army, and support them during the monsoon, the money was instantly furnished him, and there afterwards remained enough in the Treasury of Madras, for every possible purpose for a considerable time. The Bengal investment this year, it was true, had been somewhat reduced on account of the war, but that the Madras investment was not only as large as usual, but fully equal to the Company's orders, and as considerable as ever it had been known to be in times of profound peace. The exchange between Bengal and Madras, was also considerably reduced, and the Coimbatore country in a state of the highest cultivation, no British soldier having entered it since February last year. Speaking of the Mahrattas, he said, Scindia might, for reasons of his own, choose to pay respect to the Poonah Government; but he was to all intents a powerful and an independent Prince; and he repeated what he had once on a former occasion said, that there could be no confederacy, formed in India against the British power there, from which we had any thing to dread, unless Tippoo Sultan took part in that confederacy; it became therefore, our essential interest not to make peace but upon such terms as should give effectual security to our possessions in India.

With regard to the Myfore Throne, if the rightful Rajah were to sit upon it again, he should not envy him his throne, provided he was contented not to invade us, or our allies. In that case he should rest perfectly satisfied. He objected to Major Maitland's having founded part of the resolutions on papers moved for by another honourable Member, whose motion was merely an object of politeness or gallantry; certainly far different from the conclusions of the honourable Major, who should have confined himself to the papers moved for by him self.

Major MAITLAND said, he should take an early opportunity of bringing forward a discussion on the particular topics to which the right honourable gentleman had alluded, and which did not fall within the extent of the resolutions he had then moved. With regard to the use he had made of some of the papers, which the right honourable gentleman had complained of, he found those papers on the table, and on perusing them, they gave him an ample ground to form the opinion he had stated respecting them.

Mr. Chancellor PITT submitted to the honourable gentleman, as he talked of another day, whether it would not be more adviseable for him either to wave the present motion, or let the amendment be put upon it, and then adjourn the debate to another day, in order to give his right honourable friend an opportunity of moving for, and producing the necessary papers to which he had alluded.

A short conversation ensued on this between Major Maitland, Mr. Chancellor Pitt, and Mr. Dundas, the result of which was, that the Major did not chuse to wave his motion.

Mr. HIPPISEY said, that he rose with astonishment, to hear expressions fall from a right honourable Secretary, so little suited to the gravity of the occasion. Motives of gallantry and politeness were very short, indeed, of those which had influenced him to call for the production of some of the papers on the table. His object was, to rescue the memory of a much-respected friend (who, he thought, had been as dear to the right honourable gentleman as to

himself) from a foul and mischievous calumny. A report had been circulated, that the information of the late Sir Archibald Campbell stood contradicted by letters from him to Major Bonnerman. He understood, an honourable Member near him believed this report to be well founded, and had intended to move the House in consequence—that he had himself received letters from India mentioning it. Under these circumstances, he felt himself impelled, by a sense of duty to the House, as well as regard for the memory of his friend, to be the first to bring it forward, and by challenging the proof, to ascertain at once the correctness and consistency of Sir Archibald Campbell's conduct on this occasion. If such contradictory letters could possibly have existed, the declaration of Sir Archibald to the Court of Directors, must alone have been imputed to the debility he had long suffered, and which might have weakened his recollection: but the fact was otherwise, and Sir Archibald's declarations and conduct appeared by the papers now produced to have been uniformly consistent and correct. Mr. Hippisley said, it was with greater surprise he had heard such light expressions fall from the right honourable gentleman, as he had explained to him fully, in private communication, the ground of his motion. He came down to the House wholly unacquainted with the nature of Major Maitland's motions. If he had seen him earlier, he made no doubt but he could have convinced his honourable friend, that the construction he had put on Sir Archibald Campbell's letters could not be supported; and he should have no difficulty in dividing in favour of the amendment proposed on the other side of the House, though against his friends, with whom it was painful to differ.—*Amicus Plato—amicus Socrates, sed magis amica Veritas.*—This was no dereliction of his original opinions on the subject of the war; for though he acquitted the Madras Government of any hostile intention towards Tippoo Sultan, yet Tippoo had every reason to be suspicious of our intentions, from the new system prescribed by the right honourable gentleman for the Government of India; when

he saw military succeeding civil governments in all our Presidencies, our European force doubled, and the revenues almost wholly absorbed in military preparation. Mr. Hippisley said, an observation had fallen from an honourable General, which, if true, ought to have great weight with the House; it was, that he knew Tippoo Sultan's Ambassadors had concluded a treaty at Paris, the object of which was, the extirpation of the English from India. He would nevertheless say, that the fact was directly the reverse: no such treaty had taken place: the fact carried with it its own internal evidence, contradictory to the General's information. The Ambassadors were treated with the respect due to the representatives of a great Prince, but they were dismissed with mere civilities; inasmuch as orders were sent out at the same time to evacuate Pondicherry, which was carried into execution, pending this very dispute with Tippoo Sultan. At this late hour, Mr. Hippisley said, he should not enter farther into the subject.

Major SCOTT concurred with Mr. Dundas as to the expence of the war being greatly over-rated in the ideas of the people of this country. The Major also reminded the House of his having more than once called their attention to the circumstance of the seizure of the countries of Arcot and Tanjore, and putting them under the British Government.

The question being put, the House divided on one of the amendments proposed by Colonel Phipps;

For the original resolution	-	152
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For the amendment	-	42
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The debate on some of the resolutions, as before agreed, was adjourned till Monday, and the rest were either negatived, or carried with amendments moved by the Minister.

Mr. DUNDAS then moved for the several papers proposed to be taken as the ground of debate on Monday.

The House adjourned.

Friday, 16th March.

On the motion of Major SCOTT, a variety of papers of Indian correspondence were ordered to be laid before the House, some of which were ordered to be printed.

This produced a short conversation between Major Scott, Mr. Dundas, and Major Maitland; from which it was understood, that as these correspondences are very voluminous, from fifteen to twenty volumes, that what shall, in the course of the discussion of the subject, appear unnecessary, or improper to be disclosed, shall be withheld, by discharging the order as far as it regards these documents.

Mr. BURTON rose, agreeable to the notice he had given on a former day, to make a motion for leave to bring in a bill for the more effectual administration of the duties of Justices of the Peace in Middlesex. In what he should submit to the House, it was his intention to lay the foundation of an amendment in our police, by regulations for the future guidance of the conduct of Justices of the Peace; but he would propose nothing that would be found to partake in the least of a party complexion. He consulted, and had found his plan countenanced by gentlemen of both parties, and by gentlemen of no party. He hoped that the House would give the bill he intended to move for, the most serious and candid discussion, and if it met their approbation, that they would adopt it. Gentlemen, from their own observation, must be acquainted with the blessings which the country enjoyed from the fair administration of the important office of a Justice of the Peace: in London, however, the case was different, and excepting the office in Bow-street and the administration of Magistracy in the city, (where the respectable body of Magistrates considered it an addition to their dignity, and not as a disparagement, to serve their country as Justices of the Peace) those blessings were inadequately, if at all, experienced. The causes of this were too notorious to need to be mentioned. The two principal were those of a deficiency of officers in the metropolis, and

an abuse of the office itself. Those who were robbed of trifles, or slightly injured in their persons, if at a considerable distance from Bow-street, put up with their injuries rather than involve themselves in the trouble of a prosecution of the offenders, the consequence of which was, that small offences passed unpunished, and gave rise to greater, until those who committed them, went on accumulating the degree of their enormity, till it came to a crisis, and then they received a final punishment. The abuse of the office of a Justice of Peace, was also as well known as the deficiency of proper offices; it was greatly and grossly abused by men who made it a trade: those men it was not his intention to particularize; his object was to propose a remedy to cure both the deficiency and the abuse, and the mode he should submit would be by a short law, directing, first, That five offices should always be open to transact business; and, 2dly, that no fees should be received for business transacted within the districts of those offices. He should propose in his bill, that three Justices be appointed to each office; that one of those three should invariably be on the spot from nine in the morning until a late hour in the evening; that two should always be present in the principal part of the day, one of them to be a Magistrate of the Office, the other might be any gentleman in the Commission for Middlesex. The due fees to be taken to be accounted for in the receipt of His Majesty's Exchequer, for the purpose of constituting a fund, out of which the salaries of the Justices, and the other expences of the establishment, were to be defrayed. The consequence of thus rendering it impossible that a Justice of the Peace should be interested in levying a fine, or in the amount of the fine, would be, the placing him in a situation in which he could have no other interest, than the upwright discharge of his duty. To provide, however, against the possibility of the fees not amounting to a sufficient sum to defray the expences and the salaries, it was, he said, his intention to propose a clause for the payment of the remainder out of the consolidated fund, a clause to which he did not imagine His Majesty's Ministers

would object, when the consideration was a great and an important public service. These were the outlines of his plan, in which however, he had omitted the mention of another appointment which might be found necessary, viz. a Treasurer, to receive all fees for the receipt of the Exchequer, and to pay the expences of salaries and establishments. It had been proposed, he said, for the purpose of removing all idea of patronage, to leave the different appointments that must take place to carry his plan into execution, to the right honourable the Lord Chancellor, the two Chief Justices, the Chief Baron, and other persons of that description, but to this mode he had an objection, not thinking that in a responsibility so generally diffused, there could be equal security that proper persons should be appointed, as in a responsibility more confined. He thought, therefore, that it would be best for the appointment to rest in one person, where it now rested, namely, in the King, and that His Majesty's adviser should be one known and responsible person, the head of the law; but that he observed, would be a question for future consideration. In proposing the situation of the offices, he said, they would be so placed, that no part of their districts would be at a greater distance from each other than half a mile. Two consequences, he said, would arise from the establishment of such a plan as he had stated, viz. publicity and competition; their publicity would enable all the world to judge whether the Magistrates acted uprightly; and the competition arising from that publicity, would not be competition for the gain of lucre, which was the competition of the present interlopers into Magistracy, but it would be a competition for skill, for impartiality, and for integrity. His plan was not, he observed, calculated to benefit the rich, but to serve the poor; who would thereby have places of resort to go to, to obtain redress, and not, as was now too frequently the case, in their applications for redress, meet with extortion and oppression, where they ought to find justice. His propositions would not, Mr. Burton said, operate to a change of the present law, but would leave it exactly as it stood, for no Magis-

trates would be prevented from serving the Public; fees alone would be relinquished; those gentlemen who were desirous to act, would have an opportunity of acting serviceably in conjunction with the Magistrates of the office, over whom their presence might operate as a check and control. Mr. Burton said, he would trouble the House no farther, than by moving, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the more effectual administration of the office of Justice of Peace, in such parts of Middlesex, as lie in and about the metropolis."

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, it was with the greatest pleasure he rose to second the motion of the honourable and learned gentleman. He observed upon that part of the honourable gentleman's speech, in which he had stated that he had no intention to alter the law; declaring that if such alteration was necessary, and if it should be found expedient to clothe Magistrates with more power than they now possessed, such additional power he most certainly would readily vote for. He took notice of the alarming increase of pick-pockets, and their proportionable increase of audacity, which, he said, had arisen to such an height that no persons could walk the streets in safety; if in the progress of the bill he could devise any clause to enable Magistrates to take more effectual measures, than they now could, against such persons as he had described, he hoped the House would give it their most serious consideration. It was the duty of His Majesty's Ministers to look to every thing that might promote the welfare and the prosperity of the state; if therefore it should appear that the security of the people, and the morals of any class could be advanced by giving more effectual power to Justices of the Peace, such a measure could not be adopted with more propriety than in a bill which went to the reform of Magistracy.

Mr. MANWARING begged to ask the right honourable gentleman, what the defect of the law was, to which the right honourable gentleman alluded? It had occurred to him while the right honourable gentleman was on his legs, that if they went into a revision of the existing laws upon the subject, the bill might be considerably retarded, and the chief object of it defeated.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, though he thought the bill might afford a fit opportunity for introducing clauses of regulation and amendment, with respect to some of the existing laws, that had relation to the subject matter, of the present motion, he certainly would propose nothing that seemed likely to retard the object they had in common before them.

The SPEAKER submitted it to the House, that the bill being limited, as to its jurisdiction, might in that point of view be deemed a private bill, and if it were so considered, it would not only occasion different fees to be chargeable upon it, but that then it must be recollected, that private bills could only be brought in by petition, and the day of receiving petitions for private bills was past. Whereas the object of the bill was to answer public purposes, if the House thought proper, it might be deemed a public bill.

The House seemed universally willing to consider it to be a public bill.

Leave was given, and the mover and seconder, the Attorney and Solicitor General, Mr. Mainwaring, &c. ordered to prepare and bring in the same.

The House adjourned.

Monday, 19th March.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that finding it impossible to produce the necessary papers, he would move that the adjourned debate be farther postponed till Thursday.

Lord Viscount BAYAM, from the Select Committee who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of Sir Godfrey Webster, Baronet, and John Tarleton, Esquire, complaining of an undue election and return for the town and port of Seaford, in the county of Sussex, informed the House,

That the said Select Committee have determined,

That the right of election is in the inhabitants housekeepers of the said town and port paying scot and lot, and in such inhabitants housekeepers only.

That John Sargent, Esquire, is duly elected a Baron to serve in this present Parliament for the town and port of Seaford, in the county of Sussex;

That Richard Paul Jodrell, Esquire, is not duly returned a Baron to serve in this present Parliament for the said town and port of Seaford;

And that John Tarleton, Esquire, one of the petitioners, is duly elected a Baron to serve in this present Parliament for the said town and port of Seaford.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 20th March.

There not being a sufficient number of Members to form a ballot for an Election Committee, the House adjourned.

Wednesday, 21st March.

Mr. Chancellor PITT rose to give notice, that on Monday next he meant to bring forward a proposition relative to His Majesty's Crown lands, with a view to make the New Forest, in the county of Southampton, more productive of timber, fit for the use of the navy.

Mr. HIPPISEY, in the absence of Major Maitland, (who was indisposed,) moved to postpone the adjourned debate, on the question relative to the British troops being sent into the Travancore country, to Wednesday next. The order for this day was, in consequence, discharged, upon motion, and an order made for Wednesday.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, it was the intention of some friends of his, who thought as he did, that the Governor General deserved praise rather than censure, to move a general resolution in favour of the Governor General, when the debate should be resumed.

Mr. WILBERFORCE moved, that the order which stood for the 29th instant, for the consideration of the slave trade, be discharged, and then moved, that a new order be made for Monday, the 2d of April.

Colonel TARLETON also moved, to discharge the order for the call of the House, which stood for the 28th instant, and the same having been discharged, the Colonel moved, that the House be called over on Tuesday, the 3d of April.

Mr. RYDER, from the Select Committee who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of Thomas Fletcher and Clement Kynnerley, Esquires, complaining of an undue election and return for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyne, in the county of Stafford, informed the House,

That the said Select Committee, having duly considered the said statements, and the evidence adduced before them, touching the right of election, have determined,

That the right of election is in freemen residing in the said Borough of Newcastle under Lyne;

That Sir Archibald Macdonald, Knight, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyne, in the county of Stafford;

And that the honourable John Leveson Gower is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the said Borough of Newcastle under Lyne.

Mr. CLEVELAND, from the Committee who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of John Coryton, of the Borough of Fowey, Esq., &c. &c., persons who have a right to choose, nominate, and appoint, the returning officer of the said Borough; and also, the petition of Sir Ralph Payne, Knight of the Bath, and William Morhead, Esquire, respecting the right of choosing the returning officer for the said Borough, informed the House, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the persons intitled to elect the Portreeve of the Borough of Fowey are those who are capable of holding that Office, that is, such Prince's tenants only as have been duly admitted on the Court rolls of the manor of the said Borough, and have done their fealty, and such persons only are duly admitted whose lands, being freehold, were anciently, and continue to be, held immediately of the Duke of Cornwall as a parcel of his said manor of the said Borough, and whose titles to those lands have been presented at a Court Baron by a sworn homage or jury of the freeholders of the said manor.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 22d, Friday, 23d, and Saturday, 24th March.

There not being, on either of these days, a sufficient number of Members to form a ballot for an election Committee, the House adjourned.

Monday, 26th March.

Mr. SHERIDAN gave notice of his intention, early after the Easter recess, to make a motion for a reform of the Royal Burghs of Scotland.

Mr. Chancellor PITT, previous to the moving the order of the day for the House resolving itself into a Committee on the national debt bill, begged leave to state, that as the blank to be filled up in the Committee was of material importance to the bill, and as he had several alterations to suggest, it was his wish to go into the Committee for the purpose of filling up the blank, and making the alterations; after which he would move to have the bill reprinted, with its additions and alterations, by which means gentlemen would have it more fully and perfectly before them, and be enabled to go into its discussion upon a future day, in a more ample and convenient manner than by taking the discussion upon the bill as it at present stood.

Mr. FOX agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the mode suggested would be the most convenient to the House, which was accordingly adopted.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved to have the report immediately made, and its farther consideration adjourned to Friday next.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved, "That the House resolve itself into a Committee, on the report of the commissioners of woods and forests.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee accordingly,

Mr. Chancellor PITT again rose; but would not, he said, upon the present occasion, trouble gentlemen, by entering into the particulars of the reports before them: every gentleman in the Committee, he said, must be fully convinced of the necessity of the adoption of some measure for the preservation and

increase of timber for our navy; to that point he should call the attention of the Committee, and not to any thing relative to the Crown lands, the final report on which had not yet been made: in what he had to submit to the Committee he should confine himself to the report on the New Forest in Hampshire. The first proposition in the bill he should move for, would be to enable His Majesty to empower the enclosing of 20,000 acres of the Forest, for the growth of timber, and to give powers to the persons appointed for the said purpose to throw open as much of the enclosure as might be sufficiently grown, and to enclose an equal quantity of the Forest, for the purpose of always keeping 20,000 acres enclosed. In the bill, also would be a provision of compensation to the persons who had a right of common in the Forest, and that provision, which, he said, would be an ample one, was intended to be the confining the deer, which His Majesty had a right at present to let run throughout the whole Forest, to certain parts. The second provision of the bill would be to prevent injury to the timber; and the third, for the presentation of periodical reports to Parliament. He concluded by moving that the Chairman be directed to move the House for leave to bring in a bill for the preservation and increase of the timber in the New Forest, &c. &c.

Mr. SHERIDAN lamented that the right honourable gentleman had not gone more fully into his plan, which, he said, would, in his opinion, prove to be a matter of great importance, and to which there would be no inconsiderable objection. It was a matter of regret, he said, that after seven years employ, the commissioners had not been enabled to make a final report on the Crown lands. He had hoped that such a report would have been ready, and that the right honourable gentleman's proposition of that day would have been one great scheme for the public benefit. In his expectation, however, he had been deceived; he would not, nevertheless, upon the present occasion, trouble gentlemen farther than he had done, but reserved himself to the production of the bill.

Mr. HUSSEY said, he was much disappointed in the nature of the propositions offered to the House, and had no scruple to declare that thus early in the business he should give it his negative, being fully convinced that no means could be devised

for the preservation and encrease of timber for our navy, but by the sale of the lands.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that he was sensible that good provisions had long since, and repeatedly been made for the preservation of our timber, and that those provisions had been departed from ; no good reason, however, could thereby be advanced to prevent Administration exerting themselves for the same purpose, and in the propositions he should have to submit, he conceived a better prospect would be obtained for effecting the desired object, than would result from leaving the preservation and encrease of timber to individuals.

The question was put and carried, and the House being refused, the report was ordered to be made to-morrow.

Mr. HIPPISEY moved for farther correspondence between the late Sir Archibald Campbell and the Rajah of Travancore, which, combined with the letters already produced, he observed, would amount to the clearest evidence of the consistency and correctness of Sir Archibald Campbell's conduct on the subject of Travancore.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 27th March.

Mr. ROSE moved the House to resolve itself into a Committee on so much of the act of the 22d of the King, as related to the sale of lands and houses belonging to the Crown in Scotland Yard and Privy Garden. By the act he had alluded to, he said, the King could not grant away any of the premises or houses in the said places mentioned in the act ; the object of going into the Committee was, to move for leave to bring in a bill to enable His Majesty to grant to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, the premises of the old lottery offices, and the ground on which they stood.

The House went into a Committee, and came to the resolution, that the Chairman should move for a bill.

Mr. DUNDAS proposed, in consequence of the first of his bills for the relief of seamen, having undergone many alterations, suggested to him from respectable authority (Lord Hood) to withdraw it, for the purpose of presenting another bill with the alterations. Ordered.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 28th March.

Sir BENJAMIN HAMMET rose, and said, he would beg the indulgence of the House for a few words, before he took the liberty of moving for leave to bring in the bill, of which he had given notice some time since. He said, on consideration of the subject, and the attempts which had been formerly made, the ill success which had attended their endeavours, and the difficulties which had been suggested by great legal authorities, he almost determined not to trouble the House, apprehending he should not accomplish the object, which he judged proper and useful to the Public. It had been objected that no good reason could be given, why gentlemen's real estates should not be liable to pay their just debts, as well as bankers and other commercial men. If that measure could be carried, he should think it upon the whole salutary, but for many reasons it had always been opposed, and by attempting too much, he was afraid of losing the whole. He said, he saw many strong reasons applicable to bankers, which did not reach other men. Gentlemen out of business were not subject to the bankrupt laws whilst living, and he would not propose a law to make those estates liable after their decease, which were not so during their lives. But in money transactions, depending upon credit, if a man was trusted with large sums of money, either as banker, or trader, on account of his possessing, or purchasing great landed estates, such property ought to make good any deficiency, if the personal estate proved insufficient, which was not now the case. He said, he had seen so much danger, and so many real evils, which had happened for want of such a law, and steering clear of entails, general and special, he flattered himself the bill would not be opposed by any description of men, the bill being founded upon principles of justice and equity. In less happy times than those we live in, when the country was just emerging from barbarism, and the feudal system took place, there was some reason why the real property should be free, because then, the land was obliged to furnish a certain number of men for the King's service in war; and if the estates had been divided or injured, the new possessor might have

been unable to raise his quota, and the country have been unprotected. That system being in this happy kingdom destroyed, the reason no longer existed. At that time, there was very little trade, or commerce, carried on. The very name of a banker was, he believed, unknown. At this time, there were so very many bankers in the kingdom, and paper credit in all sorts of commerce, was so much and widely extended, that he thought it necessary that every possible security should be given for the money entrusted in confidence to others. He said, he would mention one instance of a banker in the city, many years since, who laid out about 100,000*l.* of the customers money in landed estates. His partner seeing the danger to himself and the creditors, in case of death, stopped the house, and carried the remainder of the money to a neighbouring banker, by which means the creditors were all paid. He said, he would not trouble the House longer, though men of more eloquence might much enlarge upon the subject, being convinced, that it would be highly unjust that any man should, with the money of others, buy large estates to go to the heir at law, either by neglect, or fraud; he therefore humbly begged leave to move, that leave be given to bring in a bill to make the estates of bankers, and other traders, liable to the payment of debts after their decease.

The question being moved and seconded, was carried unanimously; and a bill ordered to be prepared, and brought in by Sir Benjamin Hammet and Mr. Cricket, who seconded the motion.

The House resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Hobart in the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then informed the Committee, that he had concluded a bargain for the sale of the lottery for the service of the current year, which was considerably more advantageous to the Public than any that had hitherto been made. He had agreed, on the part of the nation, that there should be 50,000 tickets; and the price which was to be paid for each was 1*l.* 5*s.* which would yield a profit to the Public of 312,000*l.*

He then moved, that 812,500*l.* be raised by a lottery of 50,000 tickets, at 1*l.* 5*s.* per ticket.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR expressed his surprise, that in a time of profound peace, the Minister should have recourse to a mode of raising money, which nothing but the pressing necessities of a war could excuse; for a mode more pernicious to the lower orders of the people, or more destructive to their morals, could not be devised. It was the duty of the Legislature to watch, with the utmost diligence, over the morals of the nation, and sedulously to remove every object that might tend to corrupt them. That this duty had always been faithfully performed, with one single exception, the statute books proved most clearly: for as soon as any circumstance had arisen, likely to endanger the morals of the people, the Legislature never failed to interpose, and, by some wholesome law, to avert the danger. The lottery was the single exception; and here the Legislature, instead of pursuing its usual and laudable system, held out the object which was most likely to strike at the root of morality, and consequently was responsible for the consequence: if the people fell into the temptation, the Parliament, it must be admitted, had spread it for them.

The evils and crimes produced by the lottery were infinitely greater than many gentlemen could well conceive; but he was sure, that if they would give themselves the trouble of searching for the causes of many trials in our Courts of Criminal Justice, they would be able to trace a great number of them up to the lottery, by which a spirit of gaming was diffused among the people, which could not be gratified but by the loss of their property, or the invasion of that of others. Many instances had been stated to the House, on former occasions, of the melancholy consequences of this spirit of gaming, one of which he would repeat, because it was vouched by an honourable Member, in whose family it had happened: his housekeeper, who had lived several years with him, and had, during that time, maintained an excellent character, was unfortunately tempted to risk some money in the lottery; she was unsuccessful, and wishing to recover what she had lost, she went on till she was stripped of her last shilling. Hoping still to retrieve her losses, she made free with her master's property; and the money which she received from him weekly, to be applied to the discharge of bills, and the support of his house, she diverted from this purpose, and applied it to that of insuring.

This she lost, like the rest : she now felt all the horrors of her situation, and stung with remorse for what she had done, and for the ruin of the character which she had, till then, maintained irreproachable and unfulfilled, she filled up the measure of her guilt, by putting an end to her existence !

This case had not happened during the present lottery ; but he made no doubt, that others, of as dreadful a nature, would. An honourable friend near him, he said, had just whispered to him a circumstance which had occurred within the last five minutes. A man, who lived servant with a gentleman, a neighbour of his honourable friend, had come to town, and brought with him a sum of money which he had saved in service, and which, for a servant, was not inconsiderable ; it amounted to 40*l*. He was tempted to risk some of it in insuring in the lottery ; the event was, that he had lost every shilling, and had, within these few minutes, called upon the honourable Member just near him, to request that he would help him to a small sum, to enable him to go back into the country. The honourable gentleman, finding that the man was destitute, and might be driven by despair, and want of money, to the most criminal excesses, advanced him some money, and thus snatched him from the danger that awaited him. Mr. Taylor said, he feared such cases as this were but too common during the drawing of the lottery. The Legislature ought therefore to interpose, and discountenance a mode of raising money, which led to the ruin of the lower orders of society, and a general corruption of morals. If the revenue was as productive as the right honourable gentleman was continually representing it, surely he could have no excuse for resorting to a lottery ; and it would be much better for the Public to continue to pay the taxes which he was taking off, than to have adopted, as a means of supply, a scheme which was big with ruin to so many individuals, and to the morals of the nation in general. It was not his intention, seeing the Committee as thin as it then was, to say any thing more on the subject, or to oppose the resolution that had been moved ; but he would conclude, by asking the right honourable gentleman one question, viz. whether it was his design to make a lottery a permanent part of the ways and means of the year ?

Mr. Chancellor PITT, in reply, said, that the question did not seem to affect the resolution before the Committee, as it did not tend, in any degree, to find fault with the particular scheme proposed in it : with respect to any future lottery, every succeeding Committee of Ways and Means would have an opportunity of judging, whether it should or should not adopt a lottery, as a source of supply. The real drift of the honourable gentleman, in putting the question, appeared to be, to learn what were his sentiments, with respect to a lottery, as a permanent resource : he would not make any difficulty about satisfying the honourable gentleman on that head ; and, therefore, he would not hesitate to say, that he considered a lottery as the means of raising a supply, so much more advantageous to the Public, than that which the honourable gentleman would prefer, viz. taxes, that he, for one, would not consent to forego it.

Here Mr. HOBART read the resolution, and just as he was going to put the question upon it,

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR rose again, and said, “ I am then
“ to understand, that the right honourable gentleman considers
“ revenue of so much importance, that sooner than he would,
“ in any degree, diminish it, he would adopt a measure pernicious to the morals of the people.”

After the question was carried, the House was resumed.

The order of the day, for resuming the debate on the question relative to the troops sent by the Madras Government into the Travancore country, having been moved and read,

Major MAITLAND rose. He said he had been led to think, from the triumphant tone in which gentlemen on the other side had, in the last debate on this subject, mentioned certain papers, for which they moved, and to give time for the production and perusal of which, the adjournment had been proposed, that he should find himself compelled, by the force of truth, to retract all the opinions he had entertained on the subject of the war in India. This he would have been most ready to do, for he was disposed at all times to renounce error ; but after having since perused those papers with the greatest attention, he had not discovered the smallest reason for retracting his former assertions on this head, or altering his opinion ;

on the contrary, he had found new grounds for strengthening it.

The defence set up for those who had advised the war, was, that the dominions of the Rajah of Travancore, our ally, being threatened, the English being bound by treaty to protect them, had been obliged to march into that country to oppose an invader; and that consequently the war on our part was purely defensive. Unfortunately, however, for this argument, it appeared from the papers upon the table, that when there was first a question of sending troops into the Travancore country, the English Minister at the Rajah's Court received instructions from our Government at Madras, to represent the measure in such cautious terms, as not to alarm the Rajah at the idea of introducing into his dominions, not what he asked for, a small force, just to shew that he was under our protection, but absolutely an army, and such an army as in former days would have been sufficiently strong to carry the glory of the British, and victory, through any part of Hindostan. It was evident then, that in this case, our Government acted not at the request of the Rajah, but in consequence of a settled plan of hostilities, which they had resolved to carry on against Tippoo.

It appeared also from the papers on the table, that when the Rajah of Cherica had actually attacked and dislodged a British guard from a post, in the country of a Prince in alliance with England; the Government of Bombay, with great wisdom and propriety, desired this Prince would not attempt to recover the post by force; but would leave it to the English to represent the case to Tippoo Sultan, whose tributary the Rajah of Cherica actually was, and to prevail upon him to interpose his authority over his vassals, and make him do justice to a Prince in alliance with the East-India Company.

Here was a direct attack upon British troops; and yet the wise Government of Bombay had not resented it in such a manner as Lord Cornwallis had resented an attack upon the lines of the Rajah of Travancore. The reason was obvious; his Lordship had determined to wage an offensive war against Tippoo, and had actually, by his letter to the Nizam, which breathed nothing but hostility against that Sultan, provoked him to anticipate the meditated invasions of his own dominions,

by an attack upon the quarter whence that invasion was to be apprehended, because a great military force had been established there by the English, who could have no other object in such a measure, than to commence offensive operations against him.

For these reasons, and those which he urged in the former debate, he was determined to adhere to the motion, as originally moved by himself, and to oppose the amendment.

Colonel PHIPPS undertook to prove that Tippoo was the author of the war, which was on his part absolutely offensive and unprovoked. He it was who made the Rajah of Cherica attack the British guard: the ground, or pretended justification of the attack was, that the country which had been mortgaged to us, had long since paid the debt. This same Rajah had afterwards been directed by Tippoo to make a demand of a lack of rupees due to him by the Company. The Company replied, that, so far from owing him that sum, he owed them, four lacks: they offered to prove this by their accounts; but Tippoo would not suffer him to agree to so rational an adjustment of his demand, but made us resolve to take up his security, by resuming the district that had been mortgaged, for the payment of the debt which he had contracted.

When a Rajah of Cochin arrived with a body of forces to assist Tippoo in his attack upon Travancore, he upbraided him with his delay, which had kept him waiting so long for his arrival, that the time for the attack was gone by. He intimated his suspicion, that the cause of the delay was, that this Rajah had been treating underhand with the Rajah of Travancore; but the other assuring him that the delay had been occasioned by real illness, and the badness of the roads, Tippoo desired he would set out earlier the ensuing year, when he was resolved to attack the Travancore lines. He informed him also, that he would, at the same time, storm the forts of Cranganore and Cochin, the former of which, he said, he would carry in eight days, and the latter in four. He was as good as his word with respect to the lines; for, in less than thirteen months from the day on which he made this declaration, he attacked and carried them. Here then was evidence of hostilities, as premeditated by Tippoo, as they were unprovoked by us.

His hostile disposition was not confined to the English; it extended to the Dutch, who, trembling for the safety of their port of Cochin, sent him a letter, written in a stile calculated to sooth him, and deprecate his anger. His conduct, on the receipt of this letter, was completely unparalleled, except by that of a character, in a very well-written comedy, he meant Sir Lucius O'Trigger, an Irish gentleman, who, being resolved, at all events, to quarrel with another, who had never opened his lips to him, said to him, "Sir, you lie." "That, Sir," said the other, "is impossible, for when you spoke to me, I had not opened my lips to you." "That," replied Sir Lucius, "is nothing at all to the question; for though you may not have told a lie, you thought it, and that's just the same thing." Just of a piece with this was the language of Tippoo, when he received the letter from the Dutch Governor: he returned it unopened, and told the messenger, that if he ever dared to bring him so impertinent a letter again, he would give orders that his head should be struck off.

Mr. RICHARD JOHNSON spoke as follows. Sir, so much stress has been laid upon an allegation, that the war has originated in a pre-disposition in Lord Cornwallis for hostility, or in orders supposed to have been sent from Ministers at home, to promote or create such a disposition in the Government in India, that I cannot avoid obtruding upon you for a moment, to state a matter of fact, which I trust will fully repel such an idea. Upon my taking leave of Lord Cornwallis to depart, I had the honour of a conversation with him, in which he expressed his strong and anxious apprehensions, from his knowledge of Tippoo's movements, that hostilities from him were almost certain; lamented the exceeding personal inconvenience, public as well as private, it would be to him, and commissioned me to assure Ministers at home, that nothing but the most indispensable necessity should urge him to war, and that they might rely upon its being on such grounds as should be perfectly justifiable. These expressions, from one of his Lordship's direct and honourable character, are, in my

mind, a positive proof, as it must be to all who know him, that neither a pre-disposition existed in his Lordship, nor that any orders could have been received from England, to create such a disposition; for it was impossible he should lament that which he wished, or find it necessary to apologise to Ministers for what he had their orders. Those gentlemen who have thought proper to deny the justice of the war, have been driven to seek the cause of it elsewhere, than in the unavoidable necessity or propriety of it. They therefore have sought it in this supposed previous disposition for war. Having now, as I trust, absolutely removed that ground, I proceed to consider the justice of it, and to assert that the Dutch were free to sell a fort which they had held above a century, which they had obtained from another European power, neither of them at any time paying tribute for it, they were free to sell, our ally free to buy, and the British power free to support its ally in so fair a transaction. If a British ally was not equal to this, he would be better without such an alliance. But I maintain that it was not merely just, but perfectly unavoidable, from the mode Tippoo chose of redressing his supposed wrong, or rather making that the pretext for seizing upon the territories of our ally. I will venture to go one step farther, and assert, that so far from any such disposition to war, the very reverse existed; I mean a disposition to suffer every thing that could be suffered, consistently with the honour of this country: for I beg leave to say, that an all-sufficient excuse for war had subsisted, even from the moment of signing the treaty of Mangalore; for Tippoo had broken that treaty in the most flagrant manner, by fraudulently retaining near two hundred of our countrymen in the most horrid bondage. If any thing could rouse and animate a Briton to war, it would be his feelings for his injured countrymen; therefore, if any blame laid, I think it is in not having gone to war sooner. But from this fact it is clear, that a disposition the very reverse of that now asserted, prevailed in India; and that we did not go to war,

until the accumulation of injury, and a positive attack, left us no option.

Now, Sir, I am one of those who deem this the most fortunate war that the British interests were ever engaged in; for the system which Tippoo's ambition had prescribed to him, made him hang over us as a formidable force, ever ready to throw itself into the scale of any enemy, that might at any time rise up against the interest of Britain. How formidable such a junction might be, now best appeared, while we felt the difficulty of contending with him alone. Fortunately for us, he had chosen to attack our ally, when he could avail himself of no support from any of his former European or Asiatic associates; for the French were engaged at home, and the Mahrattas and Nizam were joined with us. His ambition had fortunately so far blinded him, as to entrap himself; for he imagined, knowing the orders from England were the reverse of those now stated by gentlemen, (orders to avoid a war as much as possible) knowing that we felt much straitened in our finances, he trusted our hands were so tied up, that this was the time to attack with impunity our ally, whom we should tamely suffer to be destroyed; but unfortunately for him, he found the British spirit of a different temper. Under the same ambitious system, he was perpetually in arms, which obliged us, on our side, to keep up a constant war establishment, upon a frontier of near five hundred miles in length. A perpetual war establishment is a situation no nation is equal to, and which must in the end have rendered nugatory the surplus resources of Bengal, even without an invasion; therefore, I look in the result of this war for the removal of two such great evils; and I consider the expence of it as the purchase of our future peace and safety, not only in the reduced power of the foe, but in an economical reduced peace establishment. I at the same time must mention a singular circumstance, founded in the shape and relative positions of the dominions of the powers at war, which is, that whatever extension of territory may be acquired, whether to be reserved for

ourselves, or given up to present or future allies, will diminish the line of our defence ; as any new line across the peninsula, south of the Kistnah, must be shorter than that now forming the boundary longitudinally from the Kistnah to very near Cape Comorin.

I therefore conclude, by declaring my opinion, that the war is not merely just, but unavoidable ; that we should have been disgraced had we not repelled the attack ; not alone disgraced, but we should have shaken, if not destroyed, every present and future alliance ; as by a desertion of the principle of supporting our allies in fair objects, and leaving them exposed to the usurping ambition or resentment of powerful foes, we should justly deserve to lose all those connected with us. In addition to this, I deem the war fortunate in its commencement, political in its prosecution, and advantageous in its probable issue ; consequently I shall ever vote with all motions that may tend to encourage it, and vote against all motions that may tend to discourage it.

Mr. FRANCIS replied, that the House was not to consider the declarations of Lord Cornwallis, but his actions ; not what he had said, but what he had done. The papers on the table were authentic documents, and would shew whether the words and deeds of the noble Lord were in union, or at variance.

With respect to the treatment of the English prisoners by Tippoo, it could not be a ground for the present war, because it had been long overlooked ; and that Prince had since been considered as in amity with Great Britain ; and it was evident, from the letter of the noble Earl to the Nizam, that on the 7th of July 1789, Tippoo was, by that noble Lord himself, declared to be at peace with the English. Nothing, therefore, prior to that date, could now be urged as a ground for war with him ; and that very letter, which confirmed an offensive alliance against Tippoo, might well be considered as the real cause of a war, for which that Prince had not given any subsequent provocation.

The question being put, that the amendment stand part of
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the question, the same was carried. The amended motion was then put and agreed to.

Colonel PHIPPS rose, and after a short speech, relative to the conduct of the Rajah of Chereca, and a discussion of much of the history of the origin of the war, moved: "That it appears, that the agreement entered into by Lord Cornwallis with the Nizam, in his letter of the 7th July 1789, the establishing a military post in the Travancore country, and the carrying on war against Tippoo in consequence of his unprovoked aggressions, are consonant to the wise, moderate, and politic views established by the Parliament of Great Britain, as the rule of conduct to be observed in the British settlements in India."

General SMITH observed, that there were two propositions blended in the resolution, which, in his opinion, ought to be separated. One was the interference of the English in the business of Travancore; the other the subsequent conduct of the war. Perhaps different gentlemen might entertain different opinions on these two points; and therefore he suggested the propriety of separating them, and making each the subject of a distinct resolution.

Colonel PHIPPS said, it was his intention to state the whole of our system, in opposition to the whole of Tippoo's system; and this, in his opinion, would be best effected by a motion which should connect the origin of prosecuting it.

Major MAITLAND opposed the resolution. He said, that even though all that had been alledged hitherto in defence of the war, was unquestionably true; still this resolution ought not to be carried. A war, the most just and politic in its origin, might cease to be so, if continued longer than justice and policy required. The House was now called upon to vote, not only that the war was just at its outset, but that it was so at this very minute, that was to say, down to the date of the last dispatches from India. What documents had the House to guide its judgement on the occasion? Not one. It knew, indeed, that overtures for peace had been made by Tippoo; but whether the terms he held out were reasonable or not, whether they were such as Lord Cornwallis ought to have made the grounds of a treaty or not, or whether they were such as warranted a vigorous prosecution of the war, rather than a cessa-

tion of hostilities, were circumstances, about which, the House was completely ignorant. To pledge Parliament, thus prematurely, was as imprudent and rash as it was indecent; for what would be the situation of the House, if it should appear hereafter, that Tippoo had offered such terms as Lord Cornwallis ought to have accepted, and that his Lordship had rejected them? For his part, he would have expected a motion for a censure upon Lord Cornwallis, for not having transmitted home the propositions, whatever they were, which Tippoo made for peace, rather than a motion for approving of his conduct. The suppression of the particulars of those propositions was one of the mischiefs arising from the union of the chief military and civil authority, in the person of Lord Cornwallis, which gave him a power too great for any mortal. The moment his Lordship took the field a government should have been established both at Madras and Calcutta, with power to control him, in the conduct of the war: to leave him, a military man, sole arbiter of peace or war, was a measure repugnant to every principle of sound policy.

Mr. HIPPISEY said, that there were some very material facts and conclusions to be drawn from the correspondence on the table, which had not been noticed on either side of the House. From the correspondence of Lord Cornwallis, preceding the attack of the Travancore lines, it was clear his Lordship had predetermined on war, in support of the aggrandisement of the Rajah of Travancore, as he expressly says in November, two months at least before he could hear of the attack of the lines, that if the title of the Dutch to the forts of Cranganore and Iacottah could be supported, the transfer of those places to the Rajah of Travancore should be maintained and defended. The prior letters of Lord Cornwallis, indeed, seem to speak the language of great caution and apprehension of the consequences of the dispute with Tippoo Sultan; but in this letter of November, his Lordship throws off all reservation and apprehension, and determines at once to support the Rajah in his new acquisitions. With respect to the conduct of the Madras Government, under the administration of Sir A. Campbell, Mr. Hippisley repeated his conviction, that the act of sending the troops was purely defensive, as far as it

was connected with Sir A. Campbell's motives, whose conduct had been highly consistent and meritorious. The Rajah had applied to him for a guard ; it was sent ; he then applied for officers to command his provincial battalions, which Sir A. Campbell refused, assigning good reasons for his refusal, but told him, that if he wished for two or three battalions to defend his frontiers on the East from an attack, they would be granted on application. The Rajah apprehended an attack, and well he might, as it was proved by the papers on the table, and by his own confession, since Sir A. Campbell left the Government, that he had been for two years negotiating the purchase of Cranganore, a fort seated in the dominions of Tippoo Sultan. Gentlemen had been very forward to assign motives to Lord Cornwallis to authorise the war ; none of these motives, however, were accepted or avowed by his Lordship ; but a war he determines on, independently of Tippoo's attack of the Travancore lines, on the ground before stated. With respect to the letter to the Nizam, Mr. Hippisley said, he always considered it as a most offensive letter, and such as might reasonably have excited just suspicion in the mind of Tippoo Sultan, who from this moment must have considered himself exposed to an attack from the Nizam aided by the British troops. When the Minister of the Nizam offered to rescind the nugatory articles of the treaties, Lord Cornwallis ought in prudence to have embraced the overture ; on the contrary, his Lordship recognizes and confirms those very articles, which had drawn repeated censures from the Directors on the Governments who framed them, and which were declared to be subversive of every principle of sound policy, and of every regulation which had been prescribed to those governments for regulating their conduct towards the country powers ; Lord Cornwallis had also in this letter or treaty, rescinded the negative we held on the Nizam's demand for troops ; even suggesting to the Nizam indirectly how he might employ them, and farther if, by his means, we got possession of Tippoo's country (though Tippoo at that time, Lord Cornwallis expressly says, had given us no provocation,) nevertheless, we would retain his country so conquered, paying the chout to the Mahrattas, and tribute to the Nizam. Mr. Hippisley concluded, by observing, that

these, and many other reasons equally strong, and before stated, operated with him to give a negative to the motion.

Mr. POWYS observed, that in the sense in which he should vote for the resolution, and in which he presumed it had been moved, no inconvenience could arise to the House, even though it should be found hereafter that Lord Cornwallis had rejected overtures of peace such as it would have been his duty to accept. He should consider the approbation meant to be conveyed by the resolution as confined to the origin of the war, and the judgement with which the military operations of it had been conducted: he would vote for it in this sense; but he did not consider himself as approving of any part of Lord Cornwallis's conduct, relative to which, no documents were then before the House.

Colonel PHIPPS said, he did not mean to give to the sense of the resolution the narrow limits within which the honourable gentleman intended to confine it. It was his object, unequivocally and generally, to approve of every part of Lord Cornwallis's conduct from the period, when he found himself provoked into a war which he wished to have been able to avoid, down to the date of the latest dispatches received from him.

Mr. FOX said, he would have had no desire to trouble the House to-night, but for the motion which had just been made by an honourable gentleman, and one not less improper, in his opinion, than unexpected. He therefore, instead of allowing it to pass in silence, felt it his duty to enter his solemn protest against it *in toto*, in substance as well as in form. As to the ambiguity in it, which it had been said his honourable friend had availed himself of, he must observe, that all ambiguity was now done away, because the honourable mover had completely explained the extent to which he wished it to go, and that, he believed, was a greater length than any House of Commons could very readily admit. His honourable friend had very properly asked, whether the approbation it contained, was meant to apply to the origin and commencement of the war, or to the carrying on and continuance of it. On this point the House had been told, that it was meant as a complete approbation of every thing respecting the war from its origin to the present moment; no one could suppose, that he

meant the moment he was now speaking, but down to the date of the last information that was received. Now he would ask, if there was either reason, common sense, or honesty, in passing a vote of approbation, not only of the origin and conduct of the war, as far as they were informed of it, but of the continuance of a war, which at best must be destructive and ruinous in its consequences, when they knew that terms of peace had been offered, but on all hands confessed, that they were perfectly and completely ignorant of what those terms were. One honourable gentleman had reasoned in a strange manner, when he allowed that terms had been offered, but as they had not been accepted, they must have been bad terms: he would appeal to any man, if this was a reasonable, or a becoming way for that House to reason; or rather, he would declare, that notwithstanding all the great stretches of ministerial confidence that had become so new-fangled and fashionable a mode of argument, it could not possibly have been extended to a greater length than was now attempted. He held the same opinions now that he had always done upon this war; and would ever protest most solemnly against its origin, commencement, and continuance, as an unjust, impolitic, and extravagant war; and whatever respect might be due to the honourable gentleman's opinions on other subjects, he could not help laying great stress upon the authority of the noble Earl himself, who had conducted the war; and he insisted, that the noble Earl's opinions, expressed unequivocally in his letters, bore him out in the judgement he had formed and stated to that House, whenever he mentioned either the progress or possible result of the war. He would put entirely out of the question all that had been said about the Chief of Chereca, the detention and bondage of our prisoners, and the hostile and turbulent disposition of Tippoo towards this country, for some time back, which had been much enlarged upon by the honourable mover, though he could not see that it had much to do with the question before the House; but when he recurred to the same high authority he had before mentioned, he found that no such disposition existed as that with which Tippoo was so often charged; and finding this to be the case, how could he listen to the charges of infraction of treaties so commonly alleged against him, more especially when the House and the

country were acquainted with the annual declaration which the right honourable gentleman who was Minister for Indian affairs had so often delivered in that House, that there was every appearance of peace being established on a permanent basis, and no likelihood of its being interrupted in those regions. If this was true, how were they to reconcile that declaration with the account now given, that Tippoo had been daily infringing on us and our allies, and had been doing so in some way or other for a considerable time. But Ministers could not, he was sure, continue to use those arguments, or if they did, would it add much either to their credit or their popularity? As to the forts of Iacottah and Cranganore, that subject had been very fully argued last year, and he would not go over the same ground again farther than as they might be stated as the origin of the war. Now let us see how we can convert the result of this purchase of the Rajah of Travancore from the Dutch, into an aggression of Tippoo's against our ally, which ought to have involved us in a war on pretence of a defensive treaty with the Rajah. In what manner was the Rajah our ally? Was he in the same light as Prussia or the United States? Certainly not. We stood exactly upon the footing of a simple general guarantee to the Rajah against any attack that Tippoo might make upon him. But Tippoo had made no attack whatever upon the Travancore country. On the contrary, the Rajah had actually agreed with the Dutch for those forts, and Tippoo then indeed began to form some apprehensions that the Rajah and the Dutch were laying their heads together for no good purpose towards him; it was therefore natural for him to be put upon his guard; but still nothing was done on his part, that ought to have provoked our interference, or involved us in a war: therefore not having just grounds for our proceedings, which were certainly very unlike pacific measures, we had recourse to a shuffling and disgraceful manœuvre, by pretending to defend our ally against the hostile preparations which Tippoo, in consequence of this purchase, found it necessary to make for his own defence, and for the purpose of an attack upon the Rajah of Travancore; that some such manœuvre was practised, seems to have been the opinion even of Mr. Powney.

If this was the case, our conduct was as unnecessary and unjust, as it was unprovoked and inexpedient; and, indeed, if the reverse was not absolutely true, and there was no information that could lead us to think it was, did we not expose ourselves, in the eyes of all the world, as dupes—most ridiculous dupes, to the Dutch, in this business? In all that he had argued on this point, he was borne through by the reasoning of Lord Cornwallis himself, in the papers on the table, which completely admitted and supported the statement he had given. The next question came to be, whether the Dutch had a right to sell, or the Rajah to buy, those forts? but however that point might stand, he contended, when a power, with whom we had a simple defensive alliance, chose to make any purchase from another power, without consulting us, or rather in direct contradiction to our wishes, we were in no ways bound to enter into any dispute, or involve ourselves in any war, that might be the consequence of that purchase. Could any man of common sense think otherwise? could such a doctrine be admitted in Europe? certainly it never could.

The case of Gibraltar had been stated on a former day, and he would state another case. Would any man, he said, pretend, that if France had a defensive ally, and had purchased the Austrian Netherlands, that this country and the United States would not justly take the alarm, and attack France? If a defensive alliance was considered as extending farther than the defence of the natural and proper dominions of the Prince with whom such alliance was made, better he should say, would it be for any country never to enter into any defensive alliance. If the King of Prussia, for instance, had bought Oc-zakow of the Turks, would it have been thought by this country, fit ground for us to go to war with Russia? Mr. Fox reasoned as to Lord Cornwallis's letter to the Nizam, and contended the division of Tippoo's territory therein stated, was a sufficient indication of hostile intentions on the part of Lord Cornwallis. If this country were to know, that France in concert with Spain, had projected a division of the possessions of Great Britain in the West Indies, had given Jamaica in contemplation to Spain, and had in like manner determined to dispose of the other islands, he asked, would this country bear such an insult? Most certainly we would think it a just cause

of war. Why then were we to expect that Tippoo would look on Lord Cornwallis's letter to the Nizam in a more favourable point of view? The Rajah of Travancore had got the forts, the Nizam was to have his chout, and the Mahrattas their peshcush; and this was a point, which, though our allies did not wish to stipulate for, yet our regard for them made us insist upon it, as if we had a greater regard for their interests than they themselves had. With regard to the treaties of 1766 and 1768, he considered the revival of them as more insulting, than if we had entered into a new treaty. He repeated, what was evidently Lord Cornwallis's opinion of the war, that however successful, it must be attended with ruinous consequences to the Company's finances. He reprobated the acquisition of territory, as a cause of war; and likewise, the idea, that this was the proper time to take advantage of Tippoo Sultan's situation in order to crush his power, when his ally, the French, were unable to assist him. With regard to what had been said as to prisoners detained by Tippoo, that alone, if true, was a just and proper cause for going to war; but whether the facts were exaggerated, or not, he could not say; however, if true, they should have been avenged long ago. Revenge for injuries long past was a cause which he never would submit to; there were some, indeed, who thought

“ A brave revenge could never come too late.”

But it was a sentiment altogether unworthy of a great nation. The violence of passion, and the infirmities of our nature, made individuals seek revenge; but though an individual might be guided by prejudice and violence of temper, it became a great nation to be led by principle, and not by passion. Revenge, which in the case of an individual, could only be extenuated as proceeding from a sudden impulse, in the case of a whole people, was altogether unjustifiable. If the principle of private revenge was contemptible and detestable, public was certainly much more so. As to the policy of the war, he had always argued against it at the outset, but still more against its continuance, particularly as it was known that terms of peace had been offered, and rejected, though they who were about to vote their approbation of carrying on this war were totally ig-

norant of what those terms were. His honourable friend had been asked why he did not bring forward his other motion ; but while all farther information was withheld, it would have been improper for him to have done it. He was pleased that in some degree to-night the measure had been debated without introducing the characters of individuals, which was right, though in all former debates on this subject, whenever blame was imputed to the measure, it had been opposed upon the ground of character, which formed no defence, and a very unfair mode of arguing. He wished to put a question to Ministers at home, and to ask where the orders came from ? He did not talk of Lord Cornwallis ; why need he, when Ministers of the India Board here take responsibility to themselves ? and no man in that House, or out of it, who knew his temper, or disposition, would attribute to him any wish or inclination to attack absent Generals or absent Ministers, who had no opportunity of defending themselves ; it was therefore to those at home that he addressed himself. Having said thus much, he thought himself entitled to make some observations upon the noble Lord's situation, which he always had thought, and of late more than ever, was a situation in which no man, however high his character, if possessed of all the talents and abilities that a mortal could enjoy, ought to be placed ; and to this situation, over which there was no control whatever of any kind, he imputed the concealment of the terms that had been offered for a peace with Tippoo, and until they were known no man in that House, or in this country, could approve of continuing the war. He gave it as a decided opinion, that when Lord Cornwallis took the field, there ought to have been a civil Government established at Bengal, and another at Madras ; he did not mean that there was no government there, but that there ought to have been a government, with effectual powers, to judge of the progress of the war, and to which those who conducted it, might have been responsible. Combining the civil and military powers in one man, responsible to no other power in the country where he acted, he would always condemn as dangerous, and would declare, that whoever was invested with it, was possessed of a power infinitely too great to be entrusted to any mortal ; it tended to corrupt the mind, and render it unequal to those exertions which it might, in other situations, be

capable to perform. Upon all those grounds, he would only add, that his duty to his constituents, and the people of England, led him to express his opposition to the motion, which as so much had already been said on the subject, he would not press farther upon the House.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that before he troubled the House with the few observations he had to submit on the subject itself, he must make a few with regard to the manner in which gentlemen on the other side had shifted their ground, upon the discussion of the point now to be debated. If character could be a shield—if courage and abilities could be a protection from any attack, there never did exist, for honour or for virtue, a more complete answer to all than the character of Lord Cornwallis; but where there was any thing to answer without the protection of such a shield, such was the disposition of his honourable friend (Mr. Dundas), that he would not avail himself of that advantage, but would come forward boldly, and meet the attack himself.

The present motion now brought forward regarded the origin of the war in India, and the ground on which it was undertaken; but on the first day of this session, when that question came from that side of the House, on the other there was adopted a system of criticism and severity upon the conduct of certain military officers. The character of those who were fighting, and perhaps bleeding, for their country, had been most severely attacked. On that occasion, his right honourable friend had very justly said, “ If you will discuss this subject, discuss it on its own merits, and contend with those who are present; discuss the merits of the war in India from the papers now upon the table, and point your attack against us, who are here to answer you, and who avow ourselves responsible for the commencement of this war.” What then was the course they took? Instead of taking the subject up in this fair and manly way, they had reference to the letter of Lord Cornwallis to the Nizam, and making that the first ground of their attack, they then implicated the conduct of Lord Cornwallis in this transaction, and mixed it with all the opprobrious terms they were pleased to use against that war; and then, when it was refuted, they insinuated, that from that letter it would appear that there was a disposition in Lord Corn-

wallis to do something in opposition to what he said on that subject; and that in point of fact he was seeking a quarrel, and devising means to commence hostilities against Tippoo. Could any man be surprised, if he said that he considered this as a charge against the character of Lord Cornwallis? In that light it was beheld, in that light it was repelled, in that light it was argued, in that light it was refuted, in that light it was rejected by the sense of the House, as it ought to have been.

The right honourable gentleman who spoke last began by saying that he should protest against the form, the matter, the manner, and the substance of the present motion. Now, as to its form and its manner, he hoped the House would see no objection. What was the form of its being moved? Had they called on the House to decide before they knew what had passed on this war, and therefore the House should not give their sanction to the present motion? No such thing. He called on them for nothing more than to follow the form, the matter, the manner, and every thing but the substance, of a motion already made and strenuously supported by gentlemen on the other side of the House; namely, a motion for censure. If, therefore, they thought themselves in possession, on that occasion, of sufficient materials for censure, there should certainly be admitted that the subject was fit for investigation, and therefore they would give those who differed from them in opinion leave to urge their opinions, and to express them according to their feelings.

As to the point which had been urged with so much reliance of success in point of argument, the carrying on of the war after proposals or terms of peace had been offered since the commencement of hostilities, he must say, that the observation did not apply to the present case, for the points here to be considered were the origin of the war, and the conduct of it, as appeared by the papers on the table. Gentlemen were pleased to say, that terms of peace had been offered on the part of Tippoo—To which he begged leave to say, “No such thing.”—There were no official accounts that were not now on the table, and it did not appear by

them, that terms of peace had been offered. He had no information of such terms—He knew of none—True it was that Tippoo had sent vakeels to treat for peace, but without explaining the conditions upon which he proposed to conclude it; and on the whole, we had reason to believe, it was his object to separate us and our allies in India. There being then no terms, as far as we knew, of peace offered on any condition that we could honourably accept, the natural and fair conclusion was, from all the circumstances of the case, and most particularly from the character of Lord Cornwallis, that no honourable terms for peace had been offered to him, and by him rejected. But did the resolution now before the House say that he should carry on the war, notwithstanding any terms of peace that may have been offered? By no means; it only approved of the origin of the war on our part, and of the continuance of it, as far as we at this time have any knowledge of the circumstances with which it had been attended.

Having made these observations on the matter, the manner, and the form of this motion, he then came to what appeared to him to be the substance of the case, and the foundation of the whole dispute between them, namely, the point of aggression. Supposing it to be admitted that the Rajah of Travancore had a right to buy Cranganore—Supposing that the Dutch had a right to sell—Supposing the purchase to have been completed—Supposing the Rajah of Travancore to be our ally, and that an attack was made on Cranganore by Tippoo, and, finally, that Tippoo had no rational ground of suspicion, the point then would be quite clear; and those who agreed with him in opinion that Tippoo had no rational ground for suspicion, would be convinced of the propriety of the war on our part; because the attack on the part of Tippoo was wanton, and because that attack was made upon our ally, such honourable gentlemen would accede to the motion now before the House.

These were clear grounds, and they were grounds that had been argued repeatedly, and on which the House had already decided. They had already declared their opinion

that there was no provocation to Tippoo to justify his attack on our ally, but having made it, we were as much bound by our treaty in that part of the world as by any other in any Court in Europe to defend the rights of our ally, for our own honour, for the sake of the British name, and the British nation; for he was convinced that our interest, and the safety of our possessions, required our interference on this occasion.

Much stress had been laid on the point, that the purchase of a place, which may be the object of a war, is to involve the allies of the purchaser in that war; and for this purpose the right honourable gentleman had been pleased to allude to Oczakow, and had supposed that had it been sold by the Porte to Prussia, there would have been an end to all the discussion on the late armament, upon the point of preserving the balance of power; that the question of purchase of a fortress, capable of being used offensively, might involve us in a war. The truth was, that here there was a little variation from the fact, for that Oczakow was in the possession of Russia, and that from that possession His Majesty's Ministers were, under all the circumstances of that case, of opinion, that the balance of power might eventually be affected, if the Russian arms were not opposed; this observation was a little better than any of the excuses which Tippoo made for his conduct, and just as good as the other arguments, which gentlemen, in this country, were pleased to assign for him in that House.

The letter of Lord Cornwallis he considered as nothing more than a proper explanation of a doubtful clause of a former treaty, and that it was only so intended by Lord Cornwallis, and that it was conformable to the spirit of the law of nations, and was such as agreed with the subsequent orders of Parliament. The letter proved, that Lord Cornwallis was not desirous of war, but was inclined to peace, and he would maintain, that this division of territory, by this purchase, could not reasonably excite the jealousy of Tippoo. He said, he was not afraid to

rest the whole case on that simple issue, and he was ready to discuss that abstract point, provided it was done with decency; he would appeal to the sense of the House---to any man in it, or out of it, on this subject, and rest the whole on the plain sense of the case, taking the origin of the war, the policy of the war, and the character of Lord Cornwallis, who had the conduct of it, into consideration. He believed there would be no difficulty in coming to a conclusion on that point; as to the idea of the danger of our approving here what might, perhaps, turn out to be ruinous to our character in India hereafter, there was a high probability that we should have favourable intelligence from that quarter, before there was any chance of any account arriving there of the effect of the deliberations of that House upon the subject; and therefore, upon that topic, he should say nothing farther.

With regard to the present power of France in India, he would freely confess, that he hoped this nation was much too noble in its spirit to avail itself for a moment, or cherish a wish to avail itself, in so unmanly a manner, of the distresses of that kingdom, to build on that distress our own aggrandisement; but if we had seen that there was a policy to distress, and perhaps destroy the interest of the British power in India; if we knew that some time since, and at this moment had reason to believe that Tippoo had combined with the power of France for the purpose of destroying all our power in India, we should be led to say that the continuance of our power there was not to be stated as the effect of their forbearance, or as a piece of good fortune in any other way than the kind interposition of the providence of heaven in our favour. It was the protection of Providence that preserved the justice of the cause of this country from falling a sacrifice to the power of France in India. They could not now disturb us there, and therefore we should certainly not now be negligent of our rights at this moment. Hereafter, if they should rise into splendor, it might become their policy to use all their endeavours to destroy all our power in India, and follow their former scheme of aggrandisement and ambition!

Mr. FOX said, " Never shall this representation of what
" I say pass unnoticed by me. Allusion has been made to
" the first day of the present session, and to what was then
" said on this subject on that day. We are charged with
" having entered into a critical inquiry into the character of
" honourable and absent officers. Who introduced it?—
" Who called for this inquiry?—The gentlemen on the
" other side insisted on our bestowing praise, when we in
" our hearts believed it was not deserving. They insisted
" on our becoming critics upon the subject which they in-
" troduced. They asked, desired, demanded my opinion.
" They now blame me for giving it freely! Whatever the
" House may think upon this war, I hope they will see we
" could not abstain from giving an opinion. It was a free,
" an honest, and candid opinion. Whoever asserts otherwise,
" or insinuates it was not so, asserts what does not become a
" man of sentiment, generosity, or honour."

Mr. Chancellor PITT. " I did think that the gentle-
" men on that side of the House did attack the character of
" absent officers upon materials not then before the House,
" or before the Public. What the matter was, I do not
" know. They have now retracted. I am glad they do so;
" I had rather those observations should come from them,
" than from any one of those in whose conduct I am inter-
" ested."

Mr. FOX. " Again I must and will appeal to the recol-
" lection of this House. I ask whether they did not call
" for, provoke, demand our criticism? Whether, if we are,
" they did not make us critics?"

Mr. PITT. " Where the blame lies, there only let it
" be. I shall assert, as often as it shall be necessary to assert,
" that there was an attack made on the character of absent
" officers."

Mr. FOX. " I do not attack the character of any man.
" I gave my opinion freely, because the other side called for
" the discussion."

Mr. FINCH said, that pains had been taken that day to
poison the mind of an illustrious personage.

Mr. FOX, without rising, colloquially said, " I do not understand him."

Mr. TAYLOR wished to know to what the honourable gentleman alluded, when he said, " poison the ear of an illustrious personage."

No answer was given.

The question was then put on Colonel Phipps's motion, and carried.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 29th March.

The House in a Committee on the Greenland Fishery bill, went through the same, with amendments, the report of which was ordered to be received on Tuesday next.

Mr. Chancellor PITT presented the New Forest bill, which was read the first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday next.

The House adjourned.

Friday, 30th March.

The order of the day was read for the House to go into a Committee on the National Debt bill.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, before the House went into the proposed Committee, it was proper for him to state, that several alterations and provisions had been thought necessary to be made in that bill, and to discuss which, it appeared to him that, in regularity, a previous Committee should discuss those alterations; for which reason he meant to move, that this bill be re-committed. He then went into a detail of the principle, nature, and extent of the bill; and having done so, begged that gentlemen who differed from him in opinion, would state fairly and fully what their objections were. There were two objects which this bill embraced; the first was, to follow up the system laid down by the Committee in 1786, the reduction of taxes, by an application of some part of the surplus towards easing the public of taxes, and the remainder to be applied to the fund for extinguishing the national debt; the next was, to adopt some perma-

ment system for providing against future debts, that might be unavoidable, from the exigencies of the times, after allowing the million-yearly, which by the bill of 1786, was chargeable out of the consolidated fund, and all the other expences of the year. He went over great part of what he stated very much at large in his speech on the opening of the budget, with regard to buying up stock, and redeeming annuities, as they became redeemable. He adverted to the high price of the funds, owing to the present flourishing state of the country, and which conspired to make it easier for the country to buy up the four per cents, and in time to come at the five per cents, when the stipulated quantity of the national debt was actually paid off.

He then stated, that the surplus of the present year, after allowing the annual million, and all other deductions, had enabled us to appropriate 200,000*l.* towards paying the national debt, and as much towards relieving the people from taxes. This he considered, in some degree, a surplus that might be expected in future years, and when the purposes for which the lottery was established were accomplished, 300,000*l.* more might be appropriated in the same manner. He went through a long chain of figures and calculation, to explain what time the annual million would arrive, by accumulating interest, to four millions yearly, which was the object of the bill in 1786, and of which the present state of the country seemed to give him good hopes. The next point, which he took to be of very great importance, was, that a permanent system should be adopted to prevent the effects of future debts, and to establish the operation of the sinking fund, even if, by some sinister accident, it became necessary to make any new loan before the object of the bill in 1786 was accomplished. The period which was thought of for the accomplishment of that bill, was the year 1809. What, therefore, was his intention, he could shortly state thus:— That there should be some uniform system adopted for paying off any loan which necessity might require to be made, without stopping the effects of the original bill.

To do this, in his opinion, the sum to be raised to pay the interest of any such loan should bear a proportion to the amount

of the debt incurred, and the time when it ought to be paid, according to the plan laid down for paying off the debt existing in 1786, which he believed was a term of forty-six years—to do this, he thought one hundredth part of the capital borrowed would be sufficient to be raised from the country on such emergencies ; for instance, supposing it was necessary to obtain by loan ten millions, 100,000*l.* must be raised in addition to the 200,000*l.* of annual surplus appropriated for taking off taxes to pay the interest of this loan at 3 per cent. ; however, this was stating the loan at a higher rate than it probably would be ; yet if it did happen, he thought that easing their constituents of some part of their burdens immediately, would make them more ready to come forward at any future period, when it might be necessary to impose taxes upon them, especially when by continuing the system of 1786, the burden would only be temporary. He made some observations upon the probability of lowering the interest of money one, or even one-half per cent., and stated that by pursuing his system, the public credit would be raised, and the prosperity of the country, as to manufactures and commerce, such as to give sanguine hopes of success in the grand object in view, the reduction of the national debt.

Mr. FOX said, he thought he understood the right honourable gentleman as he had explained himself to the House, and he freely owned he could not bring himself to agree with his conclusions upon any of his points, except the first. There were three points into which the subject branched, and on which this bill depended. One was, the term at which the interest of the annual million, or surplus, was to cease with regard to its application. The second was the mode of the future application of it. And the third was the term of future loans. Upon the first he had some doubt, but he thought he could bring himself to agree to it ; but for the other two, he must confess he could not. In the first place, he could not understand upon what principle was the provision of this bill. He did not see that we, who had this very session thought fit to apply part of our surplus to the reduction of taxes, should not leave it to a future Parliament to make the same disposal of their surplus. Had we not now applied two hundred thousand pounds for the reduction of taxes ? When the debt is great

and when the sinking fund is small, he, who, on that instance, had thought that the surplus, whenever we had any, should be appropriated to the reduction of the debt, and could not assent to its being applied to the present taking off of taxes, in preference to that object, but had assented to the taking off of these taxes, merely because he saw that the whole surplus would not be employed in the reduction of the debt; he, who had entertained these sentiments, could not assent to this system, which might possibly apply to the state of this country, when the debt might be less, and yet, from fresh loans, to support a war, the burdens might be greater, as there seemed in such a plan to be neither justice nor wisdom. Indeed, the principle in point of legislation appeared to him to be exceptionable. He could not say he approved of the principle, which made act of Parliament for the regulation of act of Parliament. It always appeared to him to be contrary to the true spirit of legislation, that one Parliament should direct what another Parliament shall do, or that we should, by what appeared to us to be wise and just, bind our posterity to agree with us in opinion, or at least command them to follow our example. "It does not appear to me," said Mr. Fox, "that you at this time should say, that you know better what should be done with circumstances that may arise, than those who shall at the time know and feel them. I do not think that the constitution of England is so far decayed, but that at a future day the people may be as well represented as at this; I hope, that hereafter there will be men as virtuous as you—as patriotic as you—as well disposed to serve their constituents as you—as wise as you, and I hope wiser, because wisdom is in a state of progression. Knowing nothing of the future, and allowing posterity to have that knowledge, how can I, upon a general principle, agree to a system that shall bind them to perform any particular act, knowing the nature of it at that time much better than I can possibly do? This is one general objection which occurs to me upon this subject." He then pointed out the several inconveniences that might arise from this system, from the urgency of raising money upon a temporary occasion, and the immediate provision which would be to be made for the proportionate reduction of that sum, at a time when the sources of revenue might perhaps not be the

same as they were at present, and when many considerations might induce posterity to repeal some of them, from sentiments of morality, or for other reasons. As to the lottery, (though, by the bye, he did not oppose occasional lotteries) whatever the right honourable gentleman valued it at, he did not suppose that he meant to state it as a permanent revenue. However, then, we might stand when this loan came to be made, and with respect to the distance of time, whether two years or ten years hence, the argument held equally good. Money must be raised to pay the interest of this loan of 10,000,000*l.* which must at least be 300,000*l.*, so that the 200,000*l.* laid aside for taking off taxes, must again be taken from the people, and taxes laid on to the amount of 100,000*l.* more than they are now; so that their constituents will be more burdened, at a time when the national debt is diminished, and when the sinking fund is much greater, comparatively speaking, than it is now, when we are reducing taxes. For instance, without wishing to go to precision in figures, suppose our sinking fund to be at this time 1,300,000*l.*, our income 17,000,000*l.*, and our national debt 200,000,000*l.*, taking this for our present situation, then it must be allowed that, by the operation of the original bill, at some future period, when the debt shall be only 190,000,000*l.*, and the sinking fund and annual income proportionably increased, we find that when our national debt is less, our burdens, in the event of a loan, will be greater; and though our sinking fund is enlarged, and our annual income increased, yet we shall be obliged to lay taxes on our constituents to the amount of 100,000*l.* more than at this moment, when we are inclined to relax from taxation, without being able to give, in his opinion, any substantial reason for it. He contended that it always had been, and still ought to be, the general policy of this country, to apply the surplus of the revenue, whatever it might be, to the sinking fund for paying off the national debt. With regard to what had been said of public credit, and the great advantages which the country would have in making future loans, he considered that to be all matter of mere speculation; as such he would not enter into it, because the Legislature of the time, whenever it might come, must have a better and more accurate knowledge of the then existing circumstances, and of course be more able to make

the proper terms for the urgency of the occasion. As to the difference which had often been stated between a surplus arising from the revenues appropriated to pay the annual million, and a surplus arising from any other source of our revenues, he could only say that it was a distinction without a difference. With regard to annuities, he said that a loan obtained by granting long annuities, was always more unfavourable than one obtained on perpetuity; and as to short annuities, many in that House knew what was the consequence of borrowing money in that way. During the late war, the terms were greatly worse than upon any other condition. He then declared his disapprobation of the bill, and could not avoid saying, that it seemed to be brought in merely as an atonement for the rash step which the Minister had taken by reducing taxes at a time when he ought to have appropriated his surplus to the sinking fund. He contended that this was relaxing from the general system of finance, which had been so much mentioned as necessary to carry through the system of the bill in 1786, and having done so for momentary popularity, Ministers were determined to bind up, by every possible cord and tie, those who came after them from acting as their wisdom or knowledge might dictate at the time. He made several remarks upon paying off the four per cents. by borrowing money, and concluded by recurring to what he had formerly said of enacting laws to bind down their posterity, who certainly must be better judges of what ought to be done in their own times.

Mr. Chancellor PITT declared that he was exceedingly glad to have heard the right honourable gentleman's sentiments; and that differing as they did from his own upon the subject, they served to confirm him in the opinion he had before formed in his own mind of the propriety and policy of the measure then under consideration. With regard to what the right honourable gentleman had said towards the latter end of his speech, he had by no means held as a ground of the bill, that future legislatures would be less wise, or less competent to provide for the occasions of the times than the present. In the sense that the present bill could be reasonably deemed legislating for posterity, every permanent law that ever had passed, might be considered as having that effect. The bill, he begged leave to say, left the legislature in the predicament that every other perma-

nent act left it in ; for it was the meaning of every such act to operate, until a succeeding Legislature should think proper, after due deliberation, to repeal it. What was there unconstitutional, he would ask, what was there improper, what was there unwise in this? If Parliament ought not to be left open in the manner provided by the bill, he was at a loss to conceive why that had not been said at the passing of the bill of 1786? He contended that the bill would further the object of the bill of 1786, and give additional vigour to the system therein laid down, by accelerating the period when they could give constant and annual relief to the people, by lessening their burdens, and taking off taxes. The right honourable gentleman, he observed, had stated, that in times of peace and prosperity they might be allowed to take off taxes, but in times of exigence and calamity, they must be forced to impose fresh taxes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that the present prosperity of the country gave them the means of arriving at the period of continuing annually to take off taxes earlier, than they could have expected they should have been able to arrive at, when they passed the bill of 1786. He owned he felt that they had done a great deal in establishing a sinking fund, for the purpose of reducing the national debt ; but he said he did not think they had done enough, unless they provided means to prevent its inordinate accumulation in future. They would, in his opinion, omit a duty if they did not give to the sinking fund a permanent law, to encourage its continuance, and if additional arguments were wanting, that of doing away the necessity of the subject being agitated from time to time, and removing any temptation to defeat its operation to future Legislatures, would, he conceived, amply supply it. The making some provision with this view, he was persuaded, would carry with it much of the public opinion, which could not but considerably tend to assist the effect of the plan, and render it efficient.

Mr. FOX rose to explain, declaring that most of what he should offer would be strictly in explanation. He said, that surely the right honourable gentleman could not mean to be understood that the present bill would accelerate the system.— He should be glad to hear that stated. Mr. Fox then explained on what principles he had founded his own argument, acknow-

ledging that he had reckoned merely on the annual addition of 200,000*l.* to the annual million, without allowing for the lottery, for the reasons that he had stated. He adhered to his argument as to the impropriety of legislating for posterity ; and said, he was aware that the operations of several acts of Parliament took place on contingencies ; but what he objected to was, passing an act which provided, that when a future Legislature should legislate on the same subject, that then the enactments of a former statute should have such and such an effect. Mr. Fox justified his arguments of that day on the ground of duty, and declared, that no man has a right, from what he had said, to consider him as adverse to the payment of the national debt ; whatever might be thought of his prudence or his wisdom, his conduct both in and out of office had certainly not justified any such idea, as he had uniformly been forward in advising rather to continue and even to create taxes with a view to establish a fund for the reduction of the debt, than not steadily to pursue that object. He mentioned that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a loan since the passing of the bill of 1786. It was, he said, to be sure, a loan by Tontine, but it would be forty-six years before it would be discharged. He concluded that, he did not know any thing else that required explanation, or called for remark ; but he should like to know how the provisions in that bill could be stated, as tending to accelerate the effect of a plan, which it appeared to him rather calculated to delay.

Mr. Chancellor PITT declared, that he had not said that the bill tended to accelerate the discharge of the national debt, but that there was not one word in it, that retarded any thing that might be the object of any preceding bill, that might have passed. The Chancellor begged to say a word or two on a part of the right honourable gentleman's speech, that particularly called for comment, viz. that he was not less sanguine than he was for the discharge of the national debt. He was free to confess that the right honourable gentleman had in the present session, especially, shewn himself anxious for that object, by his arguments against appropriating any part of the existing surplus, but he had on former occasions held other language, and as the right honourable gentleman had pointedly observed upon his loan in 1786, before any man knew that the state of the

country would prove so prosperous as it had since very fortunately done, he must take the liberty of mentioning a loan of a much greater size, the Spanish loan of three millions and upwards.

Mr. FOX gave his reasons for not mentioning the Spanish loan which was not disapproved by him, though the affair was terminated by a convention peace on terms that, he said, he certainly did not deem proper or good enough for the country. Mr. Fox again explained how far he thought the present bill would accelerate the discharge of the national debt, viz. as far as the 400,000*l.* appropriated this session went. He declared he thought it his duty to state what he had done, that he had ever maintained the necessity of establishing a fund for reducing the national debt, and maintained it as strongly during the very short time that he had the honour to sit on the other side of the House, as during the time that he had the honour to sit where he then was. He did not mean to say that he had been as instrumental in enforcing his opinion as the right honourable gentleman; he had not had the power to do so, but he wished it as warmly.

After farther explanations on both sides,

Mr. FOX confessed he had mistaken the right honourable gentleman in one particular, viz. in the appropriation of the interest of the funds bought up with the 400,000*l.*

Mr. CATOR argued the principle of tying down the Legislature, when it made a new loan to provide for its repayment in a limited time. The *remboursement*, he said, had been the ruin of France.

At length Mr. Chancellor PITT settled it, that they would recommit the bill *pro forma*, and adjourn the consideration of it in the Committee to Tuesday next, in order to afford opportunity for a full discussion of the several clauses.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS observed, that a regulation was wanting with regard to the Offices of Masters in Chancery, and particularly with respect to the Office of the Accountant General of that Court. The business had multiplied very much, and it was necessary to raise a fund for the better payment of salaries to clerks and officers. This fund he should, on a future occasion, propose to institute, out of the money which now stood in the Bank of England, in the name

of the Accountant General of the Court of Chancery, in trust for the suitors of that Court, the amount of that money he stated to be upwards of eleven millions. He proposed, that an account of such money should be given from October 1777, to last October. If any honourable gentleman wished it, he should have no objection that the account should come down to the present day; but he had taken the first of October last, and should rest satisfied with that time, unless some other day should appear better in the opinion of any honourable Member of that House. He should have a motion to make on Monday, for leave to bring in a bill upon this subject. He then moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account of all the
" balances of dead cash and securities, belonging to the suitors
" of the Court of Chancery, remaining in the Bank of Eng-
" land, in the name of the Accountant General of that Court,
" from the first day of October 1777, to the first day of October
" 1791, &c. &c." This motion was agreed to.

Mr. BAKER said, that there were a vast number of petitions to be presented against the slave trade—that many of them would remain for that purpose until Monday; he therefore hoped, that the day would not be loaded with other previous business.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS said, he trusted there would not be much difficulty in this case; he wished the subject to be now brought forward, in order that gentlemen might have time to reflect on it during the holidays.

The House adjourned.

Monday, 2d April.

Mr. GREY brought up the report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the practice and effect of imprisonment for debt. He observed that he was far from having completely made up his mind in what mode he should proceed upon this subject. He should consult higher authority and better understanding than his own before he should bring any thing forward, and in the mean time he should pursue the inquiry with all the diligence he could. But again he must repeat what he had often repeated, because still false impressions remained on the minds of some of the public, that as he never had, so he must

now profess that now he had not, any idea of moving for an insolvent bill. He meant nothing of that kind. But that the measure he should bring forward would be something for the better regulation of imprisonment for debt, and for security for payment to the creditor. Having said this, he moved, "That the report be laid on the table to be perused by the Members of the House."—Ordered.—"That the report be printed." Ordered.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS entered into a history of the business of the Court of Chancery, as far as regarded the Office of Accountant General of that Court, the rise and progressive encrease of business in that office. He made several observations, necessary for the introduction of the motion with which he concluded—"That leave be given to bring in a bill to empower the High Court of Chancery to lay out farther sums of money belonging to the suitors of the Court of Chancery upon proper securities, and for employing part of the interest towards discharging the expence of building offices to deposit deeds and writings belonging to the suitors of the Court, and for providing clerks, &c. &c."

This produced a short conversation between Mr. Francis, Mr. Baker, Sir James Johnstone, and the Master of the Rolls: after which leave was given to bring in the bill.

Mr. WILBERFORCE moved, "That all the evidence given on this trade be referred to the Committee." Ordered.

He then moved the order of the day, which was for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider of the circumstances of the African slave trade.

The House resolved itself into a Committee accordingly. Sir William Dolben in the chair.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, that, notwithstanding the ill success he experienced on former occasions, he was not deterred from renewing his application at present; for, the more he deliberated on the subject of this nefarious traffic, the more eager did he feel, and the more, if possible, was he convinced that it ought to exist no longer. Whatever difference of opinion had before subsisted, and however obstinacy may be led to persist in what prejudice might have prompted, however, in fine, gentlemen may be interested in reserving a traffic which

they supposed to be advantageous, yet he trusted that time and reflection had convinced them that the trade was as injurious to their interests, as it was disgraceful to their feelings; and on this ground he should expect to meet with their support to the motion which he had to submit. He professed himself desirous of now holding no other language than that of conciliation. He was fully aware that several gentlemen acted from pure principles, and honourable motives. Judging by the humanity and indulgence with which their own slaves were treated, they could not perhaps conceive how the feelings of others could be so hardened, or their conduct so cruel. But, as it was not to such men that the unhappy slaves had to ascribe their miseries; neither should a few instances of mildness seem to atone for the general severity. He wished not to be misunderstood, so as that it should be supposed, when he reprobated a system, he also reprobated individuals; he hoped that the cause of justice and humanity would be kept distinct from all personal considerations. It was not a Trajan, or an Antoninus, that would make him in love with despotism; for though they may not misuse their power, there were a great many others that would. Aristocracy was often accounted the worst species of despotism, as, instead of one, it produced a number of tyrants: but how incomparably worse was that abominable situation, when people may go to market for the purchase of despotism, and a fellow with 40*l.* in his pocket may commence the occupation of a tyrant. The subject had been so often and fully discussed, that there were parts of it into which it would not be necessary that he should travel this evening; and therefore he should spare the House the fatigue of listening, and himself the labour of entering into much detail on the present subject.

It was to be regretted, that, in the discussion of this subject, the different parties had discovered too much warmth. He wished it had not been so, although, indeed, the subject was of a nature that would excuse warmth whenever it appeared; and if he should be led by that failing, to forget any thing material to his cause, it was matter of great consolation to him, that he had friends, whose abilities and inclination would give all necessary assistance, and supply all his defects. He could not help thinking on the present occasion that the gentlemen who were most deeply interested in the welfare of the West In-

dies, and all those who had formerly opposed him, would agree to the measure he should propose. He wished to call upon them to come to the discussion freely; to inquire what were the causes of the distinction they made between the abolition of the trade, and the welfare of the West-India islands; what evils there were, and which of them were curable, and which incurable. He believed there were persons in the West Indies who would wish to continue the traffic in negroes, and yet whose feelings had been so strongly affected by what had been said against it, that they would by no means attempt to justify the system. Indeed, it was a system that shewed too plainly the evils which attended a Government by absolute monarchy. But when he came to consider this case, he was led to remember what had frequently been said of aristocracy, where, to be under many tyrants, it was often worse than to be subject to individual despotism. The form of the Government of the unhappy Africans was absolute monarchy in general, but in regard to the slave trade, they were under the control of many tyrants; for we saw, by the evidence given of them, that whole coasts were turned into a market for slavery. There was something in that very thought sufficient to make every generous mind look with horror on the traffic.

It was pretty generally, and he believed rather industriously, rumoured abroad, that it was his design, and that of his friends, to propose, besides an abolition of the trade, the immediate emancipation of the negroes. This, however, was an intention he could never have entertained for a moment. He was exceedingly sensible that they were in a state far from being prepared for the reception of such an enjoyment. Liberty he considered as the child of reason—a seed which, when sown in any soil, would shoot into a plant, and seldom, indeed, failed to vegetate into maturity. That qualified freedom, however, which they were capable of enjoying, ought not to be withheld from them; and when disposed to be industrious, and induced by kindness to consider the place they cultivated as their own, they should expect in the end to enjoy the reward of their good services. It was in vain to represent, that at present they were well treated and rewarded, that they had kind masters and indulgent usage. It was not always, perhaps it was but seldom, that the most considerable planters dwelt on their own planta-

tions. They often lived at a distance, and sometimes in another country, while the management of their slaves was committed to their stewards and overseers. In noble minds, there was inherent a generous and humane principle, which sympathised with sorrow, and diffused a cheering familiarity to those who laboured for them. But greatly different were the effects, when power was intrusted to the low, the vulgar, the ignorant, and the base. This was the worst species of tyranny, and of this description were the overseers of plantations, whose only aim was to have as great a crop as possible, regardless by what cruelty towards the slaves they effected this grand object. By whipping, starving, and overworking these poor wretches, they in general succeeded; though that success might be of real injury to the employer; for the greatest part of his slaves being destroyed by such bad treatment, his profits are more than expended in buying others to replace them; and he frequently was compelled to retire from so disadvantageous a business. But of this the overseers are entirely regardless, and went to another plantation, having their shoulders loaded with the reputation of the amazing crops they produced for their last employer.

To talk of protection and security to the persons of the slaves, was idle in the extreme; for as a negro, by the laws of the country, was not qualified to give his evidence, he might suffer the most severe cruelties, and no white man be present, of whose testimony he could avail himself to procure the smallest redress. But supposing he had a competent witness to produce, what chance had he of redress, what hopes of convicting his master before a tribunal of whites? Most societies of men possess, in some degree, what is called by the French *l'esprit du corps*: but these people, of all others, were linked together in bonds of mutual interest, tyranny, and injustice.

The next matter to be here considered, was the law and usage of Africa arising out of the trade in question; and he confessed he could not look at it without the utmost shame and regret. These were evils so great, that, whatever were the characters of some persons concerned in the trade, he should expect to find that no consideration, or the value of the system, should keep it up, unless it could be proved that the evils were incurable; and here let the Committee recollect, that the evi-

dence of those evils being incurable, came chiefly from gentlemen of great property in the islands, but who did not reside there, so that their testimony was far from being conclusive. It was such, indeed, as ought not to come into the question, when there was evidence of a different nature to be had. It was not he who made the abolition of the trade necessary, by any thing that he had urged on it, but it was the advocates of the gentlemen in the West-India islands, by their defence of the trade, and particularly those of Jamaica: all they had said upon the subject, in defence of the trade, proved the necessity of the abolition. When they were asked questions upon this subject, they gave first one answer, and then another, going from one corner to another, and shifting their ground to conceal the real infamy of the traffic, until closely pressed, and unable to defend themselves any longer, they retired from it altogether, and, like the rat, when the house was in flames, changed their station, and hid themselves in the corner of another building. So, in this case, those gentlemen had been beat out of all chance of defending the trade itself, or the abuses of it. They took upon themselves to say, that it would be the ruin of commerce to abolish it, and that the evils which attended it are absolutely incurable. And here it would be proper to advert to the condition of these unhappy people in the West Indies, which was certainly wretched in the extreme. This he had proved on a former occasion, by the positive testimony not only of unsuspected persons on his part, but out of the mouths of the witnesses who professed a friendship for, and wished the continuance of, the trade in question; and therefore, in that respect, it would be unnecessary for him to go into any minuteness of detail. Many of the witnesses were so circumstantial, that, in describing this traffic, they went, as it were, to the very minimum of human misery.—The slave's situation, as to the punishment to which he was exposed, and to the total absence of all legal protection, was indeed most wretched. They were totally under the control of the whites: therefore, to say that they had any real legal protection, was ridiculous and absurd. If they had claims, they could not enforce them: if they were oppressed, they could not appeal for redress to their oppressors. Nor was the manner in which they were worked less severe, than their want of

protection was distressing : they were driven in the field, whipt like cattle, and often branded and treated with the greatest cruelty. Indeed, when he reflected on all that was proved in this case, and the imputation that lay on the gentlemen of the West Indies, he confessed he could not entertain a doubt, but that those very gentlemen would join the House in the most earnest desire to put an end to these shameful practices, in order that their characters might be retrieved ; and that they would see that the abolition of the trade was a measure which they would candidly admit to be proper, and which they would, from a love of justice, adopt. He trusted that they felt as he did ; and he was decidedly of opinion, that there was no measure whatever, short of the total abolition of this trade, that would answer the purpose of justice, and do away the infamy, or abate the cruelty, of making a traffic of human blood. He had heard much of colonial regulations, and that it was possible, by means of these, to reduce the trade to some tolerable system. Upon the most mature deliberation on that subject, he was convinced that no colonial regulation, of any kind whatever, would answer the purpose. But here he begged leave to observe, by way of answer to what might be objected to him, that if he took the evidence of the persons who were the friends of the trade, he was bound by the testimony they gave, and that such testimony was opposite to his idea of an abolition : that those persons gave their testimony in a situation which might reasonably afford distrust ; they were enveloped in the thickest clouds of prejudice : but even taking their evidence to be quite accurate, and quite true, it did not amount to any thing like a defence of the continuance of the slave trade.— Suppose, for instance, that these unhappy negroes had all the legal protection of those who enjoy the purest freedom, were they in a condition to make a right use of that advantage ?— Were they, in short, in a condition to enjoy those advantages which the advocates for the continuance of the slave trade pretend to say they are ready to allow them ? Indeed, he was ready to confess that he thought they were not in that condition, and that the granting of these advantages to the unhappy slaves in the West Indies, would only lead them on to demand others, and might produce much discord and misery, and perhaps finally the destruction of the plantations. This led him

to think upon the fate of St. Domingo, which had lately been the subject of much observation ; the case gave us a lesson, and we ought to reflect on it.

In the discussion of colonial possession, the French thought that a distinction ought to be made between Creoles and negroes, because they thought the latter could not see and feel liberty as well as the former ; and it came to be known by the slaves in St. Domingo, that their condition was to be altered and amended, but that there was to be a distinction between them and the Creoles. Now, if it be true that this was the cause of the insurrection, as the advocates for the continuance of the slave trade would insinuate, how can these advocates recommend what, upon their argument, tends to destroy the happiness of both the whites and blacks, without affording a chance for the happiness of either ? These were the dilemmas to which the friends of this traffic reduced themselves, by attempting to defend a system, in itself indefensible ; and again proved the fatality of attempting to amend this traffic by any jobbing whatever. But yet he was told, that surely wise laws, for the regulation of these unhappy beings, would contribute much to their happiness. To this he answered, that, before men can benefit by the wisdom of laws, it was necessary they should have some idea of freedom. Freedom itself was a blessing the most valuable in nature ; but it could be enjoyed only by a nation where the faculty of thought had been for some time employed. True liberty was a plant of celestial growth, and none could perceive its beauties, or taste of its odour, but those who had employed the nobler faculties of the human soul in contemplating the goodness of the divine essence from whence it sprung. He hoped the day would arrive when all mankind would enjoy its blessings ; but this neither was, nor could be, the case at present with the unhappy negroes in the West Indies ; and from these reflections he was led to believe, that no man could, in reality be their friend, who proposed any thing that could lead them to hope for their emancipation. The way to alleviate their misery, was to render them attached to their masters, governors, and leaders : this was congenial to the mode they were accustomed to from their childhood ; for, in Africa, they led a life agreeable to the patriarchal system. Doctrine contrary to this, seemed to him to be not only im-

proper with regard to the negroes, but also quite unsafe with regard to the West Indies. If any thing should remind them of their rights, and the system of proposed regulation certainly must, he entreated gentlemen to reflect on the number of these unhappy persons, and the vast majority they made of all the inhabitants of the islands; and if there should be any contest, what the consequence would be. What was the result of all this; a very plain one—that if these were dangers at all, they were multiplied tenfold by the importation of negroes; for those just arrived, being less inured to, must be more displeased with, the system carried on in the West Indies. Indeed, as an author of great reputation had observed, these successive importations were sufficient to account for all the plots and assassinations that we had heard of in the West Indies. By this mode of introducing new slaves, supposing that a plan of reformation were agreed upon, the whole of it would be entirely out of the question, because every year there would be introduced a set of persons who must of necessity be strangers to it.

Another topic had been observed upon frequently, the insurrections in St. Domingo. Many misstatements were made of that circumstance; and he had felt it his duty to inquire into it, because he thought it necessary for him to inquire into every thing that tended in any degree to elucidate this subject; and here he must observe, that the matter was not a dispute between the black and the white men, or of the debates in France or here. It was a dispute between the people of colour and the white people, wherein the blacks took the opportunity of rising, and some men of colour joined, for the sake of profit for themselves; and the decrees that afterwards passed in the National Assembly, that kept alive these distinctions, had been the cause in part of all the calamities that ensued. All these things proved that we should not encourage importation, under the idea that it may be regulated.

Mr. Wilberforce then took notice of the vast increase in the importation of slaves to the West Indies of late years, particularly Jamaica; and he believed that, if it was followed up for some time, the planters will have reason to lament they had ever any thing to do with that importation. But it was said, that it was impossible to go on with the trade, without importation from the coast of Africa, for the slaves there got fewer

and fewer, and weaker and weaker. Having thus described the condition he understood them to bear in the West-India plantations, he next proceeded to represent the manner of obtaining them in Africa, in which was involved the question, whether they were made happier by transplanting them to the West Indies. This subject had been so fully discussed last year, that he had no occasion to occupy much of the time of the House upon it at present: he could not hear, however, without indignation, the manner in which humanity was made to be implicated in conveying those men from what was called the cruelty of their native despots. He admitted that a greater part of the continent, particularly that near the coast, was divided amongst a set of despotic little chieftains, who were perpetually at war with each other; but he contended, at the same time, that this infamous trade was the occasion of those wars; that they were generally promoted, and frequently carried on, by the direct assistance of European traders. The chiefs did not confine themselves to making war upon each other; but it also often happened, that when one of the chiefs was in want of any European commodities, which he had not slaves enow to purchase, he would send some of his soldiers by night to set fire to a village, that he might be enabled to make captives of the flying and affrighted inhabitants. It was owing to this accursed trade that the natives of Africa were made miserable at home as well as abroad; that no man thought himself secure in his bed, or in the fields; that suspicion would not suffer him to have a friend among his own countrymen, and that in every stranger he met with an enemy. He alledged that the Europeans supplied them with powder and ammunition for their wars, and assisted them in what the language of the traffic called making trade. It would be endless to recount all the instances of violences committed by our vessels, sometimes kidnapping strangers whom they met, and at other times disguising themselves as negroes, and making an incursion in the night to plunder and destroy villages which they were trading with in the day. He observed, that the number of slaves now in the island of Jamaica only was 300,000, while that of the whites was only 20,000, and this alarming disparity they still wished preposterously to increase. He quoted the authority of Mr. Long, the historian of Jamaica, in proof of this opinion; and also an

extract from a pamphlet written by a Carolina planter. They both agreed, that the number of Africans in the islands was already too great, and could not be augmented without incurring the most imminent hazard ; that the slaves were already amply sufficient for every purpose of cultivation ; and that, when well treated, they were always found to multiply very rapidly. Of this he gave a variety of instances, particularly in late years, when their condition and way of living was somewhat mended. That they had not been more prolific, was easily accounted for, by the shameful manner in which their morals were not only neglected, but corrupted, all decency being discarded from every species of intercourse ; as indeed, in every point of view, they were regarded and treated as animals of a distinct species from man. This, he said, accounted for the disobedience of their masters' orders. Nor was it less to be attributed to the sordid and mean dispositions of their rulers, who treated them as brutes incapable of feeling. Such depravity must beget similar depravity in the minds of the slaves, as was proved by the testimony of even his adversaries' own witnesses. These poor creatures were without legal protection, subject to the cruelty of the overseers, over whom there was no control ; and those inhuman instruments of oppression whipped them like cattle, not supposing them moral agents, capable of reflection or resistance ! Even the women were not exempt from their cruelties ; the laws of decency were violated ; and this alone should induce the West India gentlemen to comply with the wishes of the friends to the abolition. There was another circumstance, to which he must call the attention of the Committee. If the testimony of a slave was not taken, there could be little use in passing any law for their relief. If a white man commits an act of cruelty toward a slave, punishment never follows. And what is the excuse given for this act of impunity ? Why, that it would be dangerous to inspire the blacks with sentiments of resistance ! He thought it would be cruel to give them the shadow of the laws for their protection, without the reality. It would be to give them that which would ultimately prove their ruin ; for if their testimony was not allowed in seeking for redress, they must always meet with punishment. It would be wrong and injudicious to awake in them a consciousness of

freedom, without a particle of the real enjoyment of liberty ; it would only create dissatisfaction, and make them if possible still more wretched.

But, that there should not be any appearance of unfairness in what he had to say, he would endeavour to state every thing he could against himself upon this subject. It had been said, that the trade yielded to this country much balance, and that its abolition would endanger that service, by diminishing the number of persons to be employed in it ; this argument had been ably taken up, and well handled, by a gentleman of great abilities, Mr. Clarkson. Instead of its being a nursery for seamen, Mr. Clarkson had proved, to a demonstration, that the opposite was the fact. Five-sixths of the sailors he computed to have died in the service, who sailed for Africa ; and the mortality was even more than what was stated by his opponents. Out of 12,263, the loss, on an average, in a voyage to Africa, was not less than 2640. Half the crews of the ships employed in that trade deserted, and were lost to the navy. If these proportions were disputed by any concerned, he was ready to go into an inquiry upon the subject. He knew they would not ; and he trusted he had stated enough upon it, without entering into any particulars, or calling here on the House to enter into the consideration of the humanity of the question ; the point of interest to the planters was enough.

It had been said, that the abolition of the trade would injure the manufactures of this country ; an assertion for which there was not the least colour of proof, nor the smallest foundation in truth. Indeed, there never had been made an excuse for the trade which was at all admissible. Those that had been attempted to be made, had been rejected by all men of sense and reflection. The persons employed in the slave trade, were never the means of employing any of the manufacturers of this country so as to promote our political welfare. Indeed, they were of the description of those who had all their life-time been employed in war, of whom the celebrated Adam Smith said, that when one hundred thousand were discharged in time of peace, he did not find that industry was increased, or that trade flourished in proportion of this change from military to civil life. The fact was, that people of this description were fit for nothing but the odious business in which they were brought up.

He had heard that Liverpool and Bristol existed, as it were, in its merchandise, upon the slave trade: this was a great error; for he had reason to believe that but a small part of the trade of these two towns was derived from this. The truth was, that a few individuals profited much by the traffic; but to state it as a great source of national wealth was ridiculous.

The next point was the interest of the islands in the West Indies. Where the question was general policy, and so it must be where all the West-India islands were concerned, the considerations of humanity and justice ought not to be forgotten; and here he confessed that all he had been saying on the West-India islands, and on the principle of policy, were inferior considerations with him. "Africa! Africa!" exclaimed Mr. Wilberforce, your sufferings have been the theme that has arrested and engages my heart—your sufferings no tongue can express; no language impart!" It was the restoration of these poor distressed people to their rights that he had nearest at heart. There he laid hold of his point; a point which he would never quit, or give up, or abandon, until he had obtained his object; and to be entitled to it, he had made out a case so clear, so plain, so forcible, so just, so irrefragable, that he was confident there was not one person, even among those who wished well to the trade, who would deny the truth of his assertion; and most particularly, they would not deny what he had said on a former occasion on this subject.

He had said, and it was true, that this traffic was totally defenceless. Such arguments were brought on that occasion to oppose him, as perfectly proved their futility, and proved too, that they were the effect of prejudice. It had been stated, that the persons taken by us were prisoners of war: this he admitted; he had not forgot that war still continued to distress and disgrace mankind. He had not forgot neither, that the persons who were thus the objects of it were his fellow-creatures.—Was it not unnatural for us, was it not absurd, that we attempted to prove to the world, that we encouraged this trade to prevent the negroes from falling into the hands of a cruel tyrant, who would put them to death, if we did not buy them? He did not imagine that we should find people shallow enough to believe this pretext. No! the truth was, that our continuing the trade was one great cause of the war; and those who

promoted it, were accountable for the mischief it produced. But war was not the one-hundredth, nor the one-thousandth, part of the calamity occasioned by this trade. The Committee would find, on looking at the evidence, that whole families were carried off from their habitations by fraud, by cunning, by violence. This was proved by a man, who said he was engaged in this very mode of obtaining slaves. He told them that families were divided; and that one part of a family was taken at one time, and another part of it at another. It at least had been matter of consolation to the husband to see his wife in bondage, because it fell to his lot to bear it with her; but even this consolation, poor as it was, was denied them! When this was asserted, it had been peremptorily denied by the advocates for the slave trade, and at last it turned out to be true; and the most distressing circumstance to a man of sensibility was, that the witnesses related all these things with indifference, as mere matters of course; a proof that the trade itself deprived its followers of all the feelings of humanity. This was not all; the sanction of law was to be given to this traffic. The name of justice was to be profaned. Men were to be accused of crimes for the purpose of convicting them, in order to furnish an excuse for their being sold as slaves. All the apparatus and machinery of injustice were to be put in motion to deprive men of their liberty; and it was a fact well known, that crimes were imputed to those who had never committed them; so far from it, that they were the best of citizens. Nay, it was now carried on to such a pitch of flagrant injustice, that almost every trivial offence was made a crime for which a man was declared liable to be sold to slavery! Another excellent effect of the propriety of continuing the slave trade! For the authenticity of these facts, he referred to the work of Mr. Moore, an ingenious gentleman, who had written on this subject. But there were other facts remaining full as bad, and as strong as those which he had mentioned. Europeans hovered round the coast of Africa like vultures, and like vultures lived on blood: they ensnared at times; and at times, by force, took away the natives, and sold them for slaves. This was mentioned on a former occasion. It was denied, indeed, but afterwards put beyond the power of doubt. In short, whatever might have been the system of the slave trade originally, the whole was now

become one system of plunder and rapacity, many instances of which might be quoted. One, in particular, to which he adverted, was the conduct of a captain, employed lately in the slave trade, off the river Camarone. He had sent some of his people, with a black in his confidence, to water on shore.—The black was seized by one of the natives for debt, and taken off. To revenge this, the captain insisted that his crew should strip naked, and blacken their hides, and wear a flock girdle, and repair on shore. Constrained to this measure, with some hesitation they agreed. They visited the house of the person who had taken off the black, fired on the family, killed his wife and children; and two poor creatures, whom they had wounded, were taken, one of whom died on shore, and the other expired when he reached the vessel! The blacks, accustomed to perpetual warfare, are always alert in revenging insults. They armed, and, in the retreat of the crew, wounded several of the British sailors; and the rest escaped with difficulty. Strange as it might appear, this did not interrupt the trade and commerce. Still Africans, like other men, have feelings; the flame, though smothered, was not subdued.—The chieftain, in a week, came on board; and requesting powder and ball from the captain, to make war on his neighbours, to procure slaves, was actually provided. Callous and dead to every sentiment of danger, thus were the instruments of revenge placed in the hands of the indignant chief; and the captain apologized to his masters, by assigning the motive for giving their ammunition to the African; at the same time observing, that he “did not waste their property!” Thus prepared, the chieftain seized the crew and the captain, and carried them on shore. When it was justly expected that death would have been the consequence of their capture, the lesson of depravity had its influence on the natives—avarice triumphed over their feelings—“perfidy was repaid by perfidy; and the captain and crew were enlarged, on condition that he would surrender the property which he had on board.”

If any thing could shew enough of the cruelties of our African dealers in the slave trade, these circumstances would do so. All this proved, that, after men were engaged in this trade for a little while, they lost all feeling and sensibility. Nothing was thought of these things by men who had been a

long while in the trade ; but it required to be a little used to it, before men could so completely lose their feelings and humanity. But these cruelties and enormities were increasing ; for, no longer ago than last August, when that House was debating on the subject of this very trade, six British vessels had anchored off Calabar, a town which seemed devoted to eternal misfortune. It appeared, from the report, that the natives had raised the price of slaves. The captains consulting together, agreed to fire on the town, to compel them to lower the price of their countrymen. To heighten, if possible, the shame of this proceeding, he said, that they were prevented, for some time, from effecting their purpose, by the presence of a French captain, who refused to join in their measures, and purchased at the high price which had been put upon the slaves. He felt, with the most painful sensibility, the shame of thus exposing the disgrace of his country ; but it was the more incumbent on him, as these very men were re-appointed to situations in the same trade, as if they had performed the most meritorious and honourable exploit. However, in the morning they commenced a fire, which lasted for three hours ; and the guns being directed by old British seamen, had their intended effect. During the consternation, the wretched inhabitants were seen making their escape in every direction. In the evening, the attack was renewed, which continued until they agreed to sell their slaves at the price stipulated by the captains. He represented that, in this attack, upwards of twenty persons had been destroyed. He did not fail to describe this cruel outrage as a mockery of all feeling, and an insult on the opinions of Parliament, and the sense of the people. [The House, in a sudden burst of indignation, vociferated, " Name ! Name ! "] Mr. Wilberforce resisted for a long time ; at last the clamour overpowered him, and we heard the following names of ship and captains : The ship Thomas, of Bristol, Captain Phillips ; the Betsey, of Liverpool, Captain Doyle ; the Recover, of Bristol ; the Wasp, Captain House ; the Thomas, of Liverpool ; and the Anatree, of Bristol. Such scenes of bloodshed and inhumanity he knew shocked the Committee. It shocked him so much, as almost to deprive him of the power of utterance. There was no consideration on this globe that would make him share such enormities. What hereafter might

await such heinous deeds he knew not—he would not have the guilt of having neglected to expose them for all the wealth in the world. The blood of it be on the guilty heads!

The next point was the usage the poor slaves met with in the Middle Passage, from the coast of Africa to the West Indies; on the cruelties of which he would not expatiate; but as it had been called a nursery for our seamen, he should observe on a few figures in the best computation we had on the subject.— In the year 1788, in a ship in this trade, 650 persons were on board, out of whom 155 died. In another, 405 were on board, out of whom were lost 200. In another there were on board 450, out of whom 200 died. In another there were on board 402, out of whom 73 died. When Captain Wilson was asked the causes of this mortality, he replied, that the slaves had a fixed melancholy and dejection; that they wished to die; that they refused all sustenance, till they were beaten, in order to compel them to eat; and that, when they had been so beaten, they looked in the faces of the whites, and said, piteously, “Soon we shall be no more.” They sometimes threw themselves overboard; but were in general prevented by the high netting placed on purpose to restrain them; and such a death they called an escape. This melancholy, and its attendant disorders, mocked all attempts to relieve them, and could only be conquered by conquering the kindnesses of human nature.— The wretches on board these ships died sometimes of insanity, sometimes of starving, and were sometimes drowned! And is this horrid traffic to be continued as a nursery for seamen?— Even when the best regulations have been made, we have lost of our sailors above eleven per cent. When those regulations were in agitation, the merchants in the trade protested that it would not be worth following; and now that those regulations took place, they loudly called out that the motion for the abolition, if carried, would be the means of their losing large profits! What! lose large sums by the abolition of a losing trade! Such were the absurdities to which the advocates of this trade in human blood were driven. In every point of view it must appear, that the interest, as well as the honour, of the country, required a discontinuance of so vile a commerce. We might reap much greater benefits by a commerce of another kind with Africa; and the Sierra Leone Company were laudably

establishing a trade, by which they would gain immense advantages, without disgracing themselves by trafficking in human blood, and in murder. It was a mockery of language to say, that relieving the negroes from their native oppression was an act of mercy; for how could mercy exist where it had not justice for its basis? Justice was the primary principle on which human happiness and morals were founded; it was that to which angels, as well as men, owed their virtues and their enjoyments. But this unjust, this murderous mercy, which we shewed to the Africans, was the same that the ferocious disciples of Mahomet displayed in the massacre of whole Christian nations in propagating the Koran; it was the same with the slaughtering humanity of the Spaniards in America, to recommend the Inquisition. He could have wished to drop for ever all recital of facts which tended to prove the cruelty of those who dealt in this odious and abominable traffic; but there was an instance which he could not omit in this case.

Notwithstanding the regulation of Sir William Dolben's bill, the situation of those wretches in the Middle Passage was little better than before, and the mortality was equally great. The instance which he should mention was the case of a young girl, fifteen years of age, of extreme modesty, who finding herself in a situation incident to her sex, was extremely anxious to conceal it. The captain of the vessel, instead of encouraging so laudable a disposition, tied her by the wrist, and placed her in a position so as to afford a spectacle to the whole crew. In this situation he beat her; but not thinking the exhibition he had made sufficiently conspicuous, he tied her up by the legs, and then also beat her. But his cruel ingenuity was not yet exhausted, for he next tied her up by one leg, after which she lost all sensation, and in the course of three days she expired. This was beyond dispute a fact. [Name! Name! Name! resounded from all parts of the House.] Captain Kimber was the man? said Mr. Wilberforce. If any thing could, in the annals of human depravity, go beyond this, he owned he did not know where to look for it. But this was not a singular instance,

there were others of the same kind ; there were proofs, beyond all dispute, of many others ; and if the honourable gentlemen wished to take notes of the horrid acts of this bloody traffic, they would employ their pens days together, in barely taking down simple facts. But this was not all ; it was well known that it was now become customary to set fire to whole villages in Africa, for the purpose of throwing the inhabitants into confusion, and taking them as they fled from the flames. Of all the trades that disgraced human beings, this was the very worst. In others, however infamous, there were some proofs of the trait of something like humanity, but in this there was a total absence of them all. It was a scene of uniform, unadulterated, unsophisticated wickedness. The tyranny and ferocity was not confined to the slaves alone ; instances might be produced of oppressive conduct to the seamen ; as a proof of which, he need only state, that out of a whole ship's crew six or seven only returned. Who was to regulate, he desired to know, a trade carried on by such agents ? agents inured to habits of robbery and murder, and whose manners were too firmly ferocious to be altered, and their conduct too uniformly brutal to be corrected by any other means, than that of abolishing the traffic itself in which they were engaged ; a trade too unjustifiable to be continued ; a system that the House ought to condemn, as disgraceful to the character of the English nation ! Which ever way it was looked at, robbery, murder, perfidy, and desolation, stared one in the face ; in Africa, in the Middle Passage, and in the islands, the same horrors present themselves to one's view. He who loved justice, would condemn the trade, for the man that loved justice must love mercy also, the one principle naturally and necessarily followed the other.

He then took a general view of all the other points on which this trade had been defended.

It had been alledged, that our abandoning the trade would have little effect, if we could not induce other nations to do the same. But this was an observation which they with greater force could turn upon ourselves. They might ask,

of what avail would it be to turn aside the petty streams of traffic, while the broad river of British commerce flowed without interruption. But was there not then remaining in our nation that pride which could resist the sordid impulse of avarice opposing itself to justice? Denmark, whose commerce could less than ours afford any degree of diminution, had already rejected the foul intercourse. It was a noble achievement, and should make Britons blush to have missed the opportunity of leading the glorious example. He could not but take notice of the unanimous sentiment which pervaded every part of the nation on this subject. Men, who differed on many speculative points, and most political topics, seemed to think alike when the paramount principles of humanity and justice were in question. Whatever tempests may agitate the lower atmosphere, all was harmony and brightness in the higher regions.

“ As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
“ Swells from the vale, and mid-way leaves the storm,
“ Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
“ Eternal sun-shine settles on its head.”

Goldsmith.

He had already stated, that the slaves now in our islands were sufficiently numerous for every purpose; that, when no more were suffered to be imported, they must of necessity be well treated; that, by proper treatment, they would multiply faster, and be better servants; and if the planters had more ground than was cultivated, they might employ it to greater advantage in cotton and cinnamon than in canes. Improvements of machinery also would diminish labour very much: and however useful those colonies were to us, yet, considering by how precarious a tenure we held them in time of war, we could not suffer any material capital to be invested with them: but, whatever may be their value, we should not consider their wishes in opposition to their real interests, and contrary to the principles of honour, justice and humanity. We had been lately informed, by him who

in the highest degree, and most deservedly, possessed the public confidence, that our commerce and revenues were in the most prosperous state imaginable; and while we possessed so many blessings, and so much happiness ourselves, surely we could the better afford, and should less grudge, to impart a portion of them to others. Prejudices had once been entertained against the negroes, which no gentleman at present could, without a blush, acknowledge; that because their complexion differed from ours, so also did their nature. This foolish idea being removed, were we to quarrel with them for being savages? He hoped not; for there certainly was not a crime imputed to the Africans, which had not actually been committed by our ancestors here in Britain. The people of England had expressed their sense against the trade, fully and forcibly, and had addressed the House, as they valued the favour of Heaven, to abolish it. If the petitions of the people of England were attended to, and surely they ought not to be disregarded, and if the trade were abolished, Mr. Wilberforce said, we should be enabled to establish another of greater profit with the natives of Africa: by abolishing the trade, the House would do good in every part of the world; all those, therefore, who were inclined to do good by wholesale, he invited to vote with him for the abolition. Those who were in doubt on the subject heretofore were, he trusted, at length convinced of the wickedness of the trade, and that the House would at length come to an unanimous vote for its annihilation. The recent enormities appeared to have been permitted by Heaven for the purpose of rendering it impossible that any one should have the presumption to justify the continuation of a traffic that was necessarily productive of crimes that admitted of no excuse or palliation whatever. His motion would somewhat differ from that which he proposed last year; though he should never be of any other opinion, than that the trade should be totally abolished immediately.

Mr. Wilberforce concluded by saying, that, in his exertions for the present cause, he had found happiness, though not hitherto success; that it enlivened his waking, and

soothed his evening hours ; that he carried the topic with him to his repose, and often had the bliss of remembering, that he had demanded justice for millions, who could not ask it for themselves ! He then moved,

“ That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the trade carried on by British subjects, for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be abolished.”

This, if carried, he should follow up by another, “ That the Chairman be directed to move the House for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the slave trade.” In this bill time might be given for that abolition, as to the House might seem meet.

Mr. BAILEY desired that the petition of the West-India Merchants and Planters should be read. It was read accordingly, and is as follows :

“ The PETITION of the Planters, Merchants, Mortgagees, Annuitants, and others, concerned in the West-India colonies, to the honourable the House of Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled,

“ Humbly sheweth,

“ THAT your petitioners learn, with much concern, that the question for the Abolition of the Slave Trade is proposed for deliberation in this honourable House.

“ That the system of peopling the West-India colonies with negroes, obtained by purchase in Africa, has long and repeatedly received the national sanction. That the acts of 9 and 10 Will. III. c. 26, and 23 Geo. II. c. 31, not only declare the African trade to be highly beneficial, and very advantageous to this Kingdom, but “ necessary for supplying the colonies with a sufficient number of negroes at reasonable rates.” That every stimulant, held out by Government for the cultivation of the West-India colonies, has directly sanctioned the importation of negroes, as the means necessary to that end ; that the islands, it is well known, are not yet possessed of such sufficient number of negroes for cultivating their lands as is above

mentioned; that this is particularly true respecting the ceded islands, where the lands were bought from Government, not only upon the faith of liberty and encouragement given to purchase negroes, but with a clause of forfeiture, in case the cultivation of the same was not completed within a certain period; that the negroes already possessed by the colonists require to be constantly recruited; that the existing proportion of female negroes, which is inferior to that of the males, and the present manners of the negroes, are each unfavourable to population; that, in case of any unusual loss of negroes, by disease, or other accidents, the only means of supplying the vacancy (which, by the nature of things, must otherwise grow more considerable and distressing) depends upon new importations from Africa. That a multitude of acts of Parliament, both ancient and modern, besides those above cited, as well as treaties of peace, or of commerce, and other national measures and documents, have alike concurred to indicate the system of this country upon the present subject. That the West-India colonists have had too high an opinion of the public faith, not to suppose that such authorities ought to form an unerring guide and solid security to them; and that on these authorities, therefore, have they, hitherto, fearlessly embarked their fortunes in distant climes.

“ That every circumstance, respecting the purchasing negroes and the transporting of them to the islands by British traders, and their treatment in the islands, has, by universal acknowledgement, and especially of late, changed for the better; so as to afford no new argument on this head, unless on behalf of the colonies.

“ That nothing to affect the question has occurred, since the late decision by this honourable House upon the evidence taken thereon; excepting, first, the partial selection and perversion of that evidence without doors, in order to deceive the nation; and, secondly, the melancholy effects arising from continuing to agitate the question.

“ That the first circumstance has occasioned various petitions to be presented to this honourable House, some of which have been improperly obtained and signed, and which, in general, have proceeded from persons either comparatively few in number, or else who have had no means of becoming acquainted with the facts in question, or with that voluminous evidence, upon which this honourable House had formed its first decision. That extracts from this evidence, confined in general to one side of the question, (and, in particular, having no reference to that mass of authority on the other side, furnished by Admirals, Governors, and others in official situations, unless to discredit it,) have been circulated in pamphlets, sold at the lowest prices, or even given gratis, wherever they could produce effect; and that, to these extracts, have been added various misrepresentations. That, if your petitioners have not, in time, exerted themselves in opposition to these measures, it is because they thought it impossible that men, avowing the pursuit of humanity and duty, could be capable of such unwarrantable and cruel proceedings; and because your petitioners trusted to the justice of their cause and to the fairness of their conduct, as well as to the wisdom, the known information, and the declared opinion, of this honourable House.

“ That, with respect to the second circumstance which has lately occurred, namely, the actual evils consequent upon the discussion of this question: without alluding to the present discredit and apprehension affecting all colonial property, they are to be found in the devastation of the largest of the French West-India colonies, with the mutual slaughter of its inhabitants. That this terrible disaster was preceded by a revolt in the English colony of Dominica, and followed by the project of another in Jamaica, happily stifled in its origin.

“ That your petitioners trust that these new circumstances are not such as to be likely to induce this honourable House to change its first opinions.

“ That it is notorious that the negroes now, consider an abolition of the slave trade to be synonymous with a general emancipation ; and that, should the abolition take place, they will, in consequence of this idea, become (in the most favourable event) less contented and less happy in their situation ; but, most probably, they will be urged to acts of desperate revolt, and involve themselves, their masters, and the colonies, in one common ruin.

“ That your petitioners will not here state the importance of the sugar colonies to the manufactures, agriculture, commerce, navigation, and revenue, of the British empire ; as being, they hope, already sufficiently felt by this honourable House, as well as acknowledged by their adversaries. That their adversaries, indeed, sensible that they could not otherwise have weight with this honourable House, pretend that these objects not only will not be injured, but will even be aided, by an abolition of the slave trade ; but your petitioners humbly hope so far to have credit with this honourable House for a right understanding of their own concerns, after a longer and closer investigation of them than can have fallen to the share of their opponents, and likewise after the calumny they have experienced for persisting in their opinions, and the consequent combination which has arisen against the consumption of their produce, as to be supposed not likely to be mistaken upon a subject in which they are so deeply interested ; and, if your petitioners do not deceive themselves herein, it is then impossible that a stake of seventy millions sterling, in the West Indies, can be affected without affecting every Member of this honourable House, as well as the nation at large.

“ That your petitioners, therefore, will humbly conclude by praying, first, either that the discussion of this question may now be terminated in such a manner as may discourage its revival (the suspension of the decision being almost equal in mischief to an abolition of the trade ;) or, secondly, if it shall be decided that the slave trade shall be abolished, that, in that case, the colonists, their creditors, and others connected with the West Indies, may be fully indemnified ; as it cannot be the design, even if it should fall within the competence of this honourable House, when pursuing a supposed measure of humanity on one side, to neglect the acknowledged claim, not only

of humaniy, but of justice also, on the side of the colonists; or to cause them to become victims to the encouragement given to the present system of West-India colonization, during above a century and a half, and to owe their ruin to no other circumstance than to a mistaken confidence in the good faith and steady conduct of the Legislature of Great Britain.

London, March 1792.

When the clerk had done reading,

Mr. BAILEY rose, and expressed the reluctance he felt in obtruding himself on the attention of the House; but, circumstanced as he was, as agent for one of the most valuable West-India islands, he found himself impelled, by the superior calls of duty, to sacrifice his private feelings, and declare his sentiments on the question, which he considered one of the most important that had ever occupied the attention of Parliament. He felt it the more necessary to declare his opinion, because a long residence in the West Indies, where he had passed the most active part of his life, had given him an opportunity of forming a better judgement on the subject, than those gentlemen who had brought it forward, and feeling, as he did, as strong an interest, as any gentleman in that House, for the trade, the manufactures, and the navigation of Great Britain, all which were vitally involved in the novel and speculating doctrines of the day, he could not refrain from coming forward, and declaring his sentiments. But it is not only a considerable portion of the trade and navigation of this country, but the very existence of those colonies, which have been established, cherished, and supported, under various acts of Parliament, that is at stake.

He then proceeded to analyze the characters of those persons who had, with so much zeal and industry, agitated this question, which he termed unfortunate and impolitic—and who had so artfully contrived to devolve the management of the business on an honourable gentleman, for whose private virtues he professed the highest respect.

This gentleman's arguments, Mr. Bailey observed, upon a former occasion, operated upon the Minister's mind, and at the same time extended their effects to the mind of the right honourable gentleman, who makes so very conspicuous a figure

on the opposite side of the House: there is, added he, neither in nor out of Parliament, a man who is a greater admirer of the incomparable and brilliant abilities of the right honourable gentleman than I am; I consider them an ornament to this House, and an ornament to their country; but however I may be disposed to bow, with all due submission, to their opinions upon other occasions, yet, upon the present question I differ with them most essentially; I mean, the opinions they gave upon the former investigation of the question; for, from the circumstances that have occurred in the history of the Western World, since the close of the last session of Parliament, I flatter myself that they are now made fully sensible of its evil, and dangerous tendency. However, to come to the right honourable gentlemen in ministerial capacities, I do maintain, that the part they acted, when the question was debated in Parliament last year, was unexpected, very unbecoming their high characters, and not at all consistent with the principles upon which, in my humble opinion, great statesmen ought to act.

I conceive it to be the indispensable duty of men in high situations, and who are, or may be, intrusted with the lead of public affairs, to consider not only the general interest of the state, but of individuals, with a most scrupulous and attentive eye, and to see that the good policy of the country, and the good understanding that has long subsisted betwixt Government and our distant colonies, under the sanction and protection of various acts of Parliament, should not be disturbed, and broken in upon, by such a wild, impracticable, and visionary scheme, as the present question for abolishing the African slave trade.

I was induced to flatter myself, that the friends and promoters of the abolition would have contented themselves with the mischiefs that had already arisen, in consequence of the agitation of that unfortunate measure, and that the sanguinary dispositions of a certain description of people, would have been fully satiated with the innocent blood that has already been spilt; but, alas! that is not likely to be the case; many of them have been known, and heard, to exult at the calamities we daily read of, so that, in all probability, the mischief is only done in part, and nothing less than the total desolation and destruction of the British West-India colonies can content them.

I have in my hand a small pamphlet, printed and published by order of the West-India planters and merchants, for the use and information of the Members of both Houses of Parliament.

It contains the speech of the deputies of St. Domingo to the national assembly of France, and also the speech of M. Bertrand, the late Minister of the Marine and Colonies, upon the insurrection of the negroes in that island.

If the destruction of the most extensive and most valuable colony in the world, the massacre of its inhabitants, the ravaging the most beautiful part of the creation in a manner hitherto unknown and unheard of, and the unnatural murder of fathers by the hands of their own children, are sufficient to operate upon the feelings of humanity, there is not, I am persuaded, a gentleman in this House, who can withstand the shock; but to me, who have a personal knowledge of the theatre of these dreadful scenes, and who (though an Englishman, and at St. Domingo in the very height of the glorious and successful war that was carried on under the auspices of that great and immortal Statesman, Lord Chatham) received distinguished marks of kindness and hospitality from many of those families, who by the late melancholy events have been transmitted to oblivion, they are doubly afflicting; and when I bring to my recollection that the causes of all these calamities have originated in Great Britain, I am overwhelmed with sorrow.

The island of St. Domingo, Mr. Chairman, is as large as the kingdom of England.

In the year 1789, the imports into that colony from France exceeded three millions sterling, exclusive of near thirty thousand negroes, which, at a very moderate valuation, may be estimated at two millions sterling more. The exports from the colony, in the same year, amounted in value to upwards of six millions sterling, and their trade gave employment to three hundred thousand tons of shipping, and thirty thousand seamen. These circumstances I take the liberty of stating to this House, as a confirmation of the testimony I gave before the Committee of the House of Commons, when sitting on the slave trade in the year 1790.

In my evidence on that occasion, I gave it as my opinion, that the African and West-India trade of France generally em-

ployed between forty and fifty thousand seamen ; and when it is considered, that the produce of St. Domingo is hardly equal to two-thirds of the whole produce of the French West-India colonies, I flatter myself it will be admitted, that I have not exceeded in my calculation.

Having said so much, by way of introduction, I must now beg leave to make some observations upon the speech of the honourable gentleman who brought it forward, which I will endeavour to do in as concise a manner as possible.

I will afterwards take the liberty of calling the attention of the Committee to the value and importance of the West-India and African trade to Great Britain ; to some of the authorities under which the West-India colonies and African trade were established ; to their dependence on each other, and to the injustice and impolicy of the present attempt to abolish the African slave trade.

The honourable gentleman who brought forward this question, has made use of nearly the same arguments on the present occasion, which he did upon the discussion of the subject last year. And though it may be considered tedious to go into the particulars of a mass of evidence, which I take it for granted, every Member of the House is master of, yet it is incumbent on me, speaking generally on the subject, to take notice of the very partial manner in which the honourable gentleman and his friends have garbled from the whole body such particular parts of the evidence as were suited to answer their own purposes ; and with what an indecent indifference they have treated the testimony of the several great and respectable characters who voluntarily came forward, on our part, to remove that load of calumny and abuse, which has been so illiberally and wantonly thrown out against every person connected with the West India islands

I am very far from denying that many acts of inhumanity have been committed in the transportation of slaves from the coast of Africa to the West Indies, and in the treatment of those negroes after they had been landed on our islands ; but as I believe, Sir, that the failings and frailties of human nature prevail generally, in pretty much the same proportion, all over the world (I mean among civilized nations) it would be very unreasonable to expect, among that class of people concerned

in the African trade, or among the inhabitants of the British West-India islands, a degree of moral perfection that is not to be found in Great Britain itself.

He submitted it to the candour of gentlemen, whether the records of the Old Bailey ought to be considered as a fair criterion to estimate the character of the English nation by. And after urging this, asked those abolitionists, if there have not been committed, in this great and opulent city, acts of as shocking, as base, and as barbarous a nature, as any contained in the great mass of evidence now lying on the table?

I have lived, continued he, sixteen years in the West Indies, and notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, I do declare, in the most solemn manner, that I consider the negroes in the British West-India islands to be in as comfortable a state as the lower orders of mankind in any country in Europe.

Before the agitation of this question, their minds were at ease, and they were perfectly contented with their situation; the confidence between them and their masters was so unbounded, that (except in the stores where sugar, rum, provisions, and cloathing were generally lodged) no locks were ever used. Such, I can assure the Committee, was the general disposition of the negroes in the British West-India islands in the year 1776, when I returned to Europe, and they continued in that happy state until the enemies of the colonies came forward and propagated, with so much zeal and industry, the principles of their pernicious doctrines. But I am sorry to say, the case is woefully reversed at present: the West-India islands are filled with emissaries and inflammatory publications by the friends of the abolition. An universal distress prevails, and instead of being in that happy state which I have represented, every countenance carries the appearance of anxiety and care: and there is not an estate without a depot for arms lodged, for the very purpose of destroying those, whose lives every principle of humanity and interest leads us to preserve. Some gentlemen may probably consider these precautions as consistent with the general system of oppression with which we are charged; but to me, who have been in situations of danger, and know something of the feelings of men upon such occasions, I can assure

the honourable gentlemen, that self-preservation foregoes all other considerations.

Having said so much, Mr. Chairman, of the civil state of the negroes in our islands, I must now advert to their religious state, beginning with the island of Grenada, where my property chiefly lies.

That island, Sir, was ceded to Great Britain at the peace of 1763. Upon our taking possession of it, the negroes were found baptized, and instructed in such of the principles of the Roman Catholic faith, as were suited to their humble capacities.— That religion now universally prevails; for as new negroes were imported from Africa, they naturally adopted the religious principles of those they found upon the island, and the Priests, who are always extremely industrious in their vocations, never failed of giving them the necessary instructions; so that, in the course of twelve months, they are generally impressed with very tolerable ideas of religious duties. There being no Protestant Clergyman at that time in the colony, the gentlemen of the island gave every possible encouragement to the religious pursuits of their negroes. One half of the number on each estate were permitted to go every Sunday to public mass, and the mornings and evenings of the Sabbath were dedicated to religious worship on the plantations, where the whole gang assembled at the dwelling-house, or mansion, and went through the service of the Church of Rome, under the immediate eye of the master or manager, in a manner, and with a fervency, that would have done credit to more civilized societies.

Mr. Bailey, (professing his own implicit belief in the sacred scriptures) declared, that, on those occasions, he entertained sentiments of the most fervent devotion, and such as would not dishonour the most pure and pious mind. As to the religious state of the negroes in the islands where the Roman Catholic faith does not prevail, he remarked, that he was sorry he could not say much. The Moravian Missionaries have of late made great progress in opening the minds of the negroes, in our old islands, to a sense of religious duties; but there is among the Clergy of our established Church a degree of inattention and indolence very much to be lamented, and which is very unpar-

donable on their part, considering the ample provision that is made for them by the legislatures of our several colonies.

The pious and respectable character, (continued Mr. Bailey) who at present so worthily fills the See of London, is, by what I am informed, extremely attentive to the morals and characters of such men as are admitted into holy orders, for the purpose of occupying the livings in the West-India islands; and I am perfectly convinced, that all possible means would be made use of by that most excellent Prelate, to extend the blessings of the Gospel to the minds of the negroes on all our plantations. Mr. Bailey then adverted to the manner in which the honourable gentleman, who brought forward this question, and his friends, had, on the present and former occasions, dwelt upon the severity of the punishments that are usually administered to our negroes in the West-India islands, and admitted, that instances of cruelty, nay even of inhumanity, may be produced; but I deny most positively, continued he, that the principle or practice is general: and I wish to be permitted to ask such of the Members of this House as have had the honour of serving in His Majesty's navy and army, if it is possible, or practicable, to maintain that order and subordination that are absolutely necessary among bodies of men, without the fear of punishment? I say, Sir, that it is not possible; and as punishments generally fall on delinquents, of whom there are a certain number in every society, I do maintain, that, in every ship's crew and regiment, there is as great a proportion of people who come within that description, as in any gang of negroes in the West Indies, be they ever so indifferently disposed.

That being admitted, I will be glad to ask, if ever there are punishments inflicted on our seamen and soldiers? Have we ever heard of seamen being flogged from ship to ship; or of soldiers dying in the very act of punishment, under the lash of the drummer, when tied up to the halberds, and exposed in as shameful and ignominious a manner as possibly can be conceived? Have we not also heard, even in this country of boasted liberty, of seamen being kidnapped and carried away, when returning from distant voyages, after an absence of many years, and that even without being allowed the comfort of seeing their wives and families?

He expressed a concern at the statement of those circumstances, and justified himself, by a reference to the very illiberal manner in which the abolition enthusiasts had brought forward every circumstance that could implicate the West Indies ; and remarked, that objects of misery and compassion are much more frequent to be met with in Europe than in America. I declare, without hesitation, said the honourable gentleman, and upon the best grounds of personal knowledge and information, that there are more wretchedness and poverty in the parish of St. Giles, in which I live, than there is in the whole of the extensive colonies that now are, and formerly were, under the dominion of Great Britain ; taking them from Barbadoes to Jamaica, round by the Floridas, and from thence to the island of Newfoundland.

Mr. Bailey hoped the Committee would excuse him for dwelling so long upon this part of his argument ; and requested their particular attention to the very unhandsome and illiberal manner in which the honourable gentleman, who took the lead in this business, and some of his friends, had treated the characters of many of the witnesses who were examined before the Committee of the House of Commons.

I am very far, continued he, from being disposed to make general reflections on any body or set of men, in the manner that has been adopted by these honourable gentlemen ; nor will I go into the particulars of the evidence, taking it for granted, that the unprejudiced part of this House will consider the individuals that have been brought forward on the part of the African merchants, to be full as respectable, as unbiassed, and as independent in their characters and situations, as those who have appeared on the other side. As to what regards that part of the evidence which applies to the West Indies, I am of a very different opinion indeed ; I admit, Sir, that there were produced by our opponents, some persons, to whose testimony a certain portion of credit ought to be given ; but they were few in number, and therefore I will venture to say, that their general body of witnesses was composed of ill-informed, ignorant, and low men ; many of them picked up in the streets of Liverpool and Bristol, where they were starving for want of bread, having neither ability nor reputation to get into any employment ; and hired by the emissaries and agents of the

Society in the Old Jewry, for the very purpose of giving such testimony as would mislead the minds of the Public, who had already been wrought up to an extraordinary state of belief, by the publication of the most incredible chain of incidents that ever appeared in print.

Have we never heard, Sir, of the names of Rodney, Barrington, Hotham, Macartney, Vaughan, or Campbell, and the many other great and respectable characters, who were examined before the Committee of the House of Commons, and gave ample testimony to the comfortable situation of the negroes in the West Indies?

Is the evidence of those gentlemen (to make use of the phrase of an honourable Member of this House) to be set at nought? Or rather, are we not to give full credit and belief to the words of men, to whom their country, in a great measure, owes the importance and weight she at present possesses among the nations of Europe?

For my part, Sir, I was filled with indignation at the very idea of drawing the opinions of such illustrious characters into comparison with the evidence of those on the opposite side, upon the discussion of the subject last year; and I lamented exceedingly, that I was not then in a situation to give my sentiments upon it.

He then proceeded to state the value and importance of the West Indian and African trades to Great Britain.

It is not my intention, said he, to take up the time of the Committee, with an account of the revenue arising to Government from the importation of the product of our West-India islands; as probably I may be told by some of the politicians of the present day, that a similar importation from Ostend or Havre, would in that respect be attended with the same advantages to Great Britain. I will therefore, Sir, confine myself, to our trade and navigation to the colonies and to Africa; and will be glad to ask such gentlemen as are pleased to pay proper attention to the subject, if the exportation to, and the importation from, the British West-India islands and Africa, to the amount in the whole of ten million sterling annually, the giving employment to 300,000 tons of shipping, and about 25,000 seamen, are not objects of the utmost importance to Great Britain? The gentlemen who had acted so very hostile a part, to

the interest of the colonies, may now, as on a former occasion, consider these objects greatly over-rated ; but as I deal in matters of fact, and in facts only, I will be bound to make what I advance appear well-founded, and to the entire satisfaction of this House, when, and in whatever mode they are pleased to order me.

Having mentioned in a concise, but accurate manner, the value and importance of our West-Indian and African trade, he pointed out some of the authorities, upon which our claims are founded ; of the dependence of the colonies upon the African trade, and of the injustice and impolicy of the present question.

However much, said he, it may be the fashion of the present times, to prefer the opinions of retired and speculative philosophers to the wise colonial system that has been established by our forefathers, and by which this country and the colonies have thriven ; yet he was convinced, that the present Parliament was too much awake to the true interests of Great Britain, not to pay proper attention to the encouragement and protection that have been given to the West-India colonies, and to the African trade, since their first establishment.

As it would take up too much of the time of the House to go fully into the authorities, he meant to confine himself to a very few ; being unaccustomed to speak in public, would beg the indulgence of the Committee to call in the aid of written information ; and to request of the clerk to read occasionally such parts of the several acts and resolutions as apply most immediately to the subject of debate.

The acts and declarations of the British Legislature, most material to this question before the House, may be classed under these different heads, viz.

1st, Such as declare the said colonies, and the trade thereof, advantageous to Great Britain, and therefore entitled to her protection and encouragement.

2dly, Such as authorize, protect, and encourage, the trade to Africa, as advantageous in itself, and necessary to the welfare and existence of the said sugar colonies.

3dly, Such as promote and secure loans of money to the proprietors at the said colonies, either from British subjects, or from foreigners.

The several acts are as follow, viz.

In the first class,

15 Car. II. cap. 7. 22 and 23 Car. II. cap. 26. 7 & 8 W. III. cap. 22. 9 & 10 W. III. cap. 23. 3 and 4 Ann, 6 Ann. cap. 30. 6 Geo. II. cap. 13. 12 Geo. II. cap. 30. 27 Geo. III. cap. 27.

In the second class,

1662 Cha. II. 1672 cap. 2. 9 & 10 Will. & Mary, cap. 26. 5 Geo. III. cap. 44. 23 Geo. III. cap 65. 27 Geo. III. cap. 27.

In the third class,

5 Geo. II. cap. 7. 13 Geo. III. cap. 14. 14 Geo. III. cap. 79.

When these several acts of Parliament were read, Mr. Bailey remarked, that if any dependence were to be placed upon the acts of the British Legislature, the authorities he had quoted must operate upon the minds of the unprejudiced Members of the House, and of the community at large, in so forcible a manner, as to afford every reasonable hope for the most perfect security to our properties.

They appeared to him unanswerable, and even to preclude the necessity of using any farther argument upon the subject; but, added he, as we have experienced a want of candour on the part of our opponents, which could hardly have been suspected, I must once more trespass on the goodness of the Committee, by requesting their attention to the encouragement and protection that have been given to the West-India colonies, and to the African trade, from the reign of Charles II. down to the present times, and especially during the reign of Queen Anne.

That reign, which may very well be called the Augustan age of Great Britain, was distinguished by the appearance of the most enlightened characters in all departments that ever any country produced; many of them remarkable for their piety and learning, and whose writings will live for ages, after the wretched productions of the miserable schismatics of the present day are buried in oblivion. Yet, Sir, we do not find, in the parliamentary history of those days, nor in any other writings that we know of, the least tendency to such wild and destructive doctrines as the present. No, Mr. Chairman, they

were reserved for this age of novelty and innovation ; and for the temper and disposition of a certain description of people, which are amply manifested by the publications of the most inflammatory and dangerous tendency with which our daily papers are crowded, and disgraced.

I am perfectly satisfied, that the question before this honourable House is only an introduction to greater evils.

The West Indies is the most vulnerable part of our dominions ; and being at a distance, and having few advocates in Parliament, is of course the most likely to become an easy object of prey to artful and designing men ; however, Mr. Chairman, our brethren in those islands being the sons of Britons, and their forefathers having carried across the Atlantic Ocean all the rights and privileges that appertain to British subjects, you may rest perfectly satisfied, that they will not tamely submit to be robbed of every thing that is dear to them. The abolition of the African slave trade will be an absolute breach of the compact that ties the colonies to the mother country ; and being founded on injustice, and contrary to the spirit and meaning of the laws of England, will meet with universal resistance.

I am perfectly well acquainted with the temper and disposition of the inhabitants of our West-India islands ; they possess abilities, having in general received the best education this country affords, and having a lively and just sense of their own rights and privileges.

I consider it my duty, as a most hearty well-wisher to the true interests of this country and its colonies, to inform this House, that it is not in the power of Great Britain to prevent the introduction of negroes into the British West-India islands.

A serious attention to the several acts I have mentioned, and to the many other authorities with which our books are filled, must fully convince every unprejudiced Member of this House, and the community at large, that the laws in existence have given as perfect security to the lives and fortunes of His Majesty's subjects in the West-India islands, as they do to his subjects in Great Britain ; and that their property cannot be meddled with or diminished, in any shape whatever, without full and ample compensation.

If Great Britain is in a situation to purchase the fee-simple of the property in all our islands, I, for one, have no objection to the making of a bargain ; but how is the value to be estimated ; Agreeably to the principles of the laws of England and of the colonies, by a jury of the vicinage ; for I can assure the honourable mover of this question, that we are not at all in a disposition to have that material point ascertained by the discretionary opinions of his friends in the Old Jewry. Mr. Bailey then asked, whether the House was not in possession of full and satisfactory information of every circumstance with regard to the West-India colonies ? Do not the the report of the Committee of Privy Council, and that immense body of evidence that was taken before a Committee of the House, and which now lie on the table, declare most positively that our present stock of negroes cannot be kept up without an importation from Africa ; and that if the African trade is abolished, there is an end of every species of improvement in all our islands ?

How, then, are the proprietors of lands in the ceded islands, which were purchased of Government, under specific conditions of settlement, to be indemnified ? And what is to become of an honourable friend of mine, now a Member of this House, and sitting near me, who, with another gentleman and myself, purchased the lands that were granted by the Crown to General Monckton in the island of St. Vincent, in the year 1773 or 1774, in consequence of the address of the House of Commons of that day to His Majesty, and as a reward for that General's military services ?

The American war, which immediately succeeded our purchase, prevented our making any progress in the sale of these lands until the year 1784. Our sales then commenced, and went on very briskly until the year 1788, when it was first known that a plan was in agitation for abolishing the African slave trade. Since that period we have done little or nothing, and we have now 1500 acres of the land on hand, which will be of no value whatever, if the present question should be decided in the affirmative.

He then demanded, whether any gentleman, either in or out of Parliament, could pretend to say, that the colonists have not a just and equitable claim upon the Government of this country for full and ample compensation ? But, waving for a mo-

ment the unfashionable doctrine of colonial rights, how, he desired to know, could compensation be made to the many thousand manufacturers, who at present find employment in providing the numberless articles that are daily wanted for the use and consumption of the West-India islands, and who must sooner or later experience the distress that will result from the present phrenzy, if the colonies should be suffered to go to ruin?

Is there a shoe, is there a stocking, is there a hat, or is there a yard of cloth of any kind, used by the inhabitants of our islands, that is not manufactured in Great Britain? Nay, the very implements of husbandry, the provisions and luxuries that are necessary for the consumption of our tables, go from this country, and that at a considerable expence of fresh commissions and insurance, every shilling of which centers in Great Britain.

Is not the whole surplus revenues of our estates spent here, and are not our children educated in this country, and instructed in those principles of affection and loyalty, that have ever made them consider Great Britain as their mother country?—And let me be permitted to ask the most inveterate of our foes, if we ever have, by any act of sedition or rebellion, forfeited in the smallest degree the countenance and protection which, as sons of Britain, and subjects of the same good and gracious Sovereign, we are most unquestionably entitled to? I maintain that we have not; and therefore, as a colonist, and in the name of the British West-India colonies, I demand of the Parliament of Great Britain, that support and protection which, upon the principles of good policy and faith, they are in duty bound to afford us, in common with the rest of His Majesty's loyal subjects.

Mr. Bailey concluded by observing, that there was still one consideration more attending the question, of full as much importance as any he had mentioned, and that was, the fatal effects a diminution of our trade would have upon the navigation of Great Britain. He then demanded, whether it did not appear, by the evidence on the table, that the West-India trade is considered a most excellent nursery for seamen; and in all the wars we have of late been engaged in, had been found

the most active and useful body of men in His Majesty's navy?

For his own part, considering the navy as our best and most natural defence, he was one of those who thought that seamen ought to be made by all possible means; and, upon that principle, contended, that the trade to Africa should meet with every encouragement this country can give. Indeed, added he, so great an enthusiast am I for the increase of our navigation and seamen, that while I have the honour of being a Member of this House, I never will give my consent to any measure that can possibly tend to lessen the number of our seamen one man. This I hold to be sound constitutional doctrine; and those who are of a different opinion, I will ever consider as ignorant of the true interests of Great Britain, and enemies to its welfare and prosperity.

Mr. VAUGHAN rose to vindicate the Planters. He lamented, that in the discussion of the question their conduct had been involved with that of the Traders; particularly as this view of the business had been used to stop the supplies of negroes from Africa. In this stage, he apprehended, it was necessary to remove any prejudices which might arise respecting his testimony, as he was connected with the West Indies by birth, profession, and private fortune. He had not resorted to merchandize from motives of necessity, but from those of independence, a noble Personage having offered to provide for him in a very ample manner. At an early period of life he had resisted this temptation, and resolved to improve his own fortune, free from the operations of political parties. With regard to his sentiments of freedom, he believed every person would be convinced, that he had certainly imbibed principles of the most laudable nature, when he mentioned, that he had been the pupil of Dr. Priestley, and had also studied with Mrs. Barbauld's father. These were ample testimonies of the rectitude of his conduct, and he flattered himself that every gentleman would thence be fully persuaded of his sincerity.

To gratify his curiosity, and to establish in his mind the complete truth, he had visited Jamaica. There he learnt, first, that the negroes were not in a state to embrace perfect liberty; secondly, that their civilization would be attended with wants unavoidable in similar circumstances; and that those who had

embarked their fortunes in the colonies, might be inevitably ruined.

What had entailed upon the planters some degree of opprobrium, was the correction of the species of negroes called Maroons. They constantly refused to work, and threw the labour upon their wives, who were ruled by their husbands in the most despotic manner.

As he had undertaken a voyage to Jamaica to form a true judgement of the subject, by the evidence of his own eyes, he delivered his opinions free and unbiassed. He scorned to sacrifice the feelings of his heart to his interest: whatever allegations he might advance were purely the effects of conviction.

The emancipation of the negroes, to which this motion, he apprehended, would operate, appeared to him impolitic and impracticable. Civilization was progressive, and should precede the grant of freedom. It ought, at the same time, to be recollected, that in a civilized state the mind had wants; but, in slavery, the body alone suffered. Between the tropics, white people could not be employed, the excessive heat of the climate rendering their services useless. The planters were anxious for the completion of their work; they required workmen, not slaves. Instead of the abolition of slavery, he most earnestly recommended schools for teaching the Christian religion, by which the purposes of society would be better answered than the indulgence of wild theories, which had already been too inimical to the community at large. The whites, he soon saw, could not replace the negroes in the field; a fact which the Sierra Leone Company had lately themselves acknowledged, in opposition to Mr. Ramsay. The situation, also, of the negroes was better than he could have supposed; for cloaths and fuel they could have little want on account of the climate; they had a house and land gratis; they suffered no imprisonment for debt, no fear of not being able to support a family to deter them from marrying; their orphans and widows were sure to be taken care of, as likewise themselves, when old, or meeting with accidents; they had medicines, surgery, midwifery, and attendance, gratis; they had their private property, which no master ever took from them. They were perfectly resigned, at the time he was abroad, to their

situation, and looked for nothing beyond it. Negroes formed the labouring poor of the islands ; and with respect to necessities, they appeared as happy as any other poor, and had as many amusements of their own and as much cheerfulness. It was cruel to say, as Mr. Ramsay had done, that they had only four or five hours to themselves in the four and twenty, for this was not enough for sleep, much less for their night rambles. To prove these assertions, he affirmed, that in all his excursions through the island, he had not seen any beggars ; every person was employed, and the negroes had the disposal of the money which they could acquire in their leisure hours.

As to Africa, there seemed no mode at that time of preventing her supplying fresh slaves ; so that he did not conceive how an error in the importation could be corrected, unless by a change in the spirit of the times, not having possession of an Alexander's sword to cut the Gordian knot by force, in the face of acts of Parliament, and without providing indemnity to the concerned.

Mr. Vaughan now proceeded to notice a number of prejudices respecting the colonies : first, that it was nothing but cruelty which occasioned the inequality of deaths and burials.—But was it cruelty that occasioned this inequality in the great city of London ? Or in particular classes of people in all places, such as domestic servants, soldiers, &c. ? It was owing to celibacy, or disease, according to the case. Among the negroes, it was owing to the formerly prevalent plan of having more males than females imported, and to the dissoluteness of those people, as well as to their diseases ; particularly among the children whose frequent deaths at a particular date from their birth and their doing well in general, if they survived that date. Thence, the calamities mentioned could not be owing to cruelty.

He remarked, that the two opinions seemed contradictory, that the negroes were wasting from cruelty, and yet that they increased to as to make farther importations superfluous. He then paid a high compliment to Mr. Pitt, and noticed one of his objections on the subject of colony population.

He spoke also of a difficulty about population, even in these islands, which nearly kept up their numbers by procreation ; which was, that the failure might be owing to the increase on

one estate compensating for losses upon another. Different estates, from different causes, were more healthy than others; but it should be considered, that these estates would not interchange their numbers. Whereas when labourers were free-men, they circulated from one employer to another, and appeared wherever they were wanted.

In small estates, or small islands, any calamity made a deep and permanent impression on the population; such as famine, plague, small pox, or war. This disaster was exemplified in Indian tribes; in many cases in history, some of which cases had lately operated in the West Indies.

He contended, that all chastisement with respect to negroes was not cruelty; the owners of slaves generally withdrew them from all public justice; so that criminals who would be publicly executed elsewhere, were often from a mistaken humanity, kept alive by their masters, and liable to be punished repeatedly from repeating their faults.

Distributive justice occasioned many punishments, as every slave was to be protected against every other slave.

The care of the negroes themselves, as to their health, provisions, cloathing, family, and the like, occasioned other punishments.

All circumstances should be distinguished from punishments, to enforce labour, or those arising from cruelty.

So far were the negroes from being neglected, that infinite anxiety occurred with many owners about their slaves whom they often visited in person when sick; and to corroborate these facts, the evidence before the House had stated that 9l. sterling had been given for attending a difficult case in midwifery.

Many diseases were new to Europeans in the islands, and required time to admit of a plan to perfect the cure.

Thus a diminution of the number of negroes, in the colonies, might happen without cruelty.

Circumstances of a very different kind, respecting the colonies, required some notice to prevent misconstruction. The objections which some persons had to consuming sugar, when it came from the West Indies, were liable, for example, to produce mischief. To obviate these allegations, he affirmed, that indigo was a plant which had no offals, and was good for neither man nor beast; so sugar was an article of cultivation,

known to be favourable to both ; and as the planters would not consent to keep their negroes idle, it was commendable to allow the negroes to be employed in the manner most beneficial to the Public.

Another objection was, that the crops of the sugar colonies were subject to many casualties, which made them precarious objects of attention. It should, however, be remembered, that gentlemen had experienced the interposition of farmers between themselves and the fluctuations of their crops ; but in the islands, the planters kept in general immediate possession of their own estates, and therefore felt every variation of the crops.

A third objection was, that the colonists were monopolists, sold sugar dear, and obtained great profits. The colony system, which was the occasion of a mutual monopoly, had given advantages to some planters, but others had purchased from the first comers so as to have bare profits.

On the whole, he had seen little, if any of the cruelty or outrage talked of ; none at all on the estate where he resided ; and the whip, the stocks, and confinement alone, were in use in other places. Thumb-screws and other instruments of torture having been entirely abolished.

He confessed that there was room for much amendment ; he would mention what occurred to him on this head, because, if proper, his hints might receive the sanction of Government. In the mean time, those persons who complained of the colonists, might do much service by resorting to the islands, and by teaching the planters how to take care of their estates and preserve their negroes, for which purpose many were ready to sell their properties to them at advantageous bargains. Thus the philanthropy of the age might be indulged, and the present proprietors might receive some compensation for their property.

Missionaries, some of the itinerant Clergy for example, present at the debate, might be of the utmost utility in the islands. The Catholics in the ceded islands, and the Moravians at Antigua, had been of the greatest benefit ; and many planters, and several island legislators, had recommended the expedient. Where religion was once instilled, there would be less punishment ; more work done, and better done ; more marriages,

more issue, and more attachment to their masters and to the Government.

Another article of much importance was to institute medical societies. Medical men had often much enthusiasm, more than in most other professions, and certainly more than in the church, the law, or the army. Their communications would contribute much to the public benefit. They had many new diseases to encounter where they had no ancient practice, nor the knowledge derived from neighbouring countries to assist them. The diseases of negro infants were particularly worthy of their attention, as he himself knew no remedy for the great disease by which they were attacked.

Task work was another improvement; there were inconveniencies in it easily to be avoided, such as having too much severity exercised upon the negroes at one time, and permitting them too much relaxation at another.

Premiums had been given to mothers for the number of children reared, but fathers had hitherto been forgotten. To these premiums might be added honorary distinctions and solid advantages, which would cost nothing to the owners.

Negro evidence should be allowed to be given in Courts of Law, with an option to the Court or jury to accept it according to the case.

Cruel masters might be punished in various ways: their negroes should be taken from them, and put into trust. Every instrument of punishment should be abolished, excepting the whip, to which might be added confinement. A limitation of the number of lashes appeared to be necessary, which, should it prove insufficient, it should be ordered that the punishment should not be repeated till after due intervals.

No danger could occur in making examples of white persons for oppression of their slaves. Such a salutary measure should be immediately adopted; the public expect it. The character of the colonists, whose conduct is exemplary, are prejudiced by being confounded with those of the most base of mankind. It is detestable to think how far the principle of sheltering the whites may proceed; in fact, they ought to extend no farther than deemed necessary to secure the slave on the one hand, and his protection on the other. Mr. Locke, indeed, in his constitution of Carolina, says, that the authority and power of the

master were absolute ; but he recommended that the slave should be permitted the choice of his religion, and the liberty of attending it.

If the abolition of the slave trade were to pass, he trusted their attention would be turned to indemnification. Without going farther into the subject at present, it must be recollected, that many thousand acres had been sold in the ceded islands for 6 or 700,000*l.* and that many hundred thousand acres had paid quitrents in Jamaica, though not fully cultivated.

The first indemnity wanted, was that of labourers, which was an indemnity in kind.

If free labourers could be found in Africa, the planters would be glad of them, as they only wanted labour, whether paid for daily or otherwise: they did not want slaves to tyrannize over them. Perhaps it was, after all, from African labourers, slaves, or freemen, that the whole parts of America now unsettled would at last be peopled.

Mr. Vaughan concluded by asking, whether Mr. Wilberforce did not design to suffer his question to be divided? namely, to have it proposed generally, first for the abolition without any limitation, and then leave room for the insertion of a limited time, if voted for?

Mr. WILBERFORCE explained the precise meaning of the motion, which was stated in the words of it.

Mr. H. THORNTON spoke decidedly for the abolition. He said, he sincerely regretted that some mercantile men, of more weight and ability than himself, had not risen to vindicate the honour of commerce, and rescue it from the disgraceful imputation, that it had, or could have, any thing in common with the slave trade, which was a scandalous traffic in human flesh. As no other person of commercial character had undertaken this task, he had resolved to take it upon himself. The two honourable gentlemen who had opposed his honourable friend's motion, had both travelled to the West Indies; but they had not visited, even in imagination, the coast of Africa, from whence the wretched slaves were brought; nor had they thought proper to take the least notice of the enormities, so ably and pathetically described by his honourable friend, which disgraced

the name of Englishmen on that coast. The two honourable Members agreed, that it was necessary to the planters to find men to work their estates, and that, if they could not get them elsewhere, they must procure them from Africa. This somewhat resembled the advice of the father to his son,—“Get money honestly if you can; but at all events get money.” For it meant this:—“Workmen we wish to procure honestly, if we can; but, let us get them what way we may, we must have them at all events.”

He would not allow that the traffic in human flesh was a trade; he could view it in no other light than as a crime; and therefore he would not consent to any regulation of it, for he would not sanction a crime by rendering it an object of regulation. He called upon all those to whom the character of a British merchant was dear, to come forward, and rescue that respectable name from disgrace, by putting an end to what was falsely called a branch of trade, but which was, in reality, nothing more than a system of cruelty, barbarity, rapine, and murder.

In addition to the instances of kidnapping given by Mr. Wilberforce, he gave some others that had occurred on the coast near the new settlement at Sierra Leone, in which he was concerned. A shot was one day heard; and, on inquiry, it was found to be a kind of *fue de joie* for the capture of an unfortunate man, who was to be sold as a slave. A man had actually sold his father, who was a rich man; and he redeemed himself by selling to the English some of his own slaves: thus was nature perverted by a commerce which we had introduced among the Africans.

Mr. Thornton read a letter from King Naimbaro, in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, who complained that three of his relations had been kidnapped, and carried off to the West Indies; where they were at that moment in a state of slavery. The letter was as follows: “My subjects, and the subjects of other Kings, have been stolen away by the inhabitants of all nations who visit this coast. Three of my own relations have been taken away by Captain Cox,

“ and sold for slaves ; for what reason I know not. I never
“ molested the property or person of others. I love the
“ natives of Great Britain ; I have borne many insults
“ from them, which have occasioned me to be silent so long ;
“ whether I shall see my relations again I know not, but
“ those who took them will be called to account for their
“ actions one day or another.” Mr. Thornton said such
was the dreadful state of the country, that neither Kings nor
people were safe ; and that, in fact, the greatest hinderance
they had found to the establishment of the Sierra Leone
colony, was owing to the general dread and fear which the
natives had to reside near the coast ; and that a principal
hope in establishing that colony, and introducing industry
and cultivation into Africa, depended upon the motion be-
fore the House—the abolition of that trade.

Mr. Thornton insisted, that, as the trading in slaves was
against every principle of justice, we ought to renounce it at
once, and not suffer any miserable idea of policy to prevail,
in making us retain what it was impossible for us to defend.
He said, the coast near the new settlement at Sierra Leone,
had once been populous, and highly cultivated ; but, in con-
sequence of the appearance of our slave ships there, it was
now almost a desert.

He maintained, that, by cultivating a good understand-
ing with the people of the country, by encouraging them
to cultivate the earth, and shewing a sacred regard for pro-
perty, we might open a thousand channels of commerce
with them, which might be carried on on both sides without
occasioning a pang to the feeling bosom, or bringing a tear
into the eye of humanity. The number of forts which we
possessed along the coast, with districts round each of them,
afforded us better means than any other European nation
possessed, of giving the natives a taste for agriculture, and
the true objects of commerce. He was of opinion, then,
that we ought to avail ourselves of this circumstance, and
renounce immediately the infamous slave trade, which was
a reproach to us both as Christians and men.

He adverted to the petitions before the House, which he maintained shewed the sense of the Public, with regard to the general injustice of the trade; and that it was derogatory to the character and dignity of the nation, to suffer it to be carried on. He thought that, while the enemies of our invaluable constitution were endeavouring to sow the seeds of discontent, it would be highly incumbent for that House to evince to the Public, that they were not the last to feel these public sentiments of justice, and that they should rather anticipate the public sentiments on every great point. He hoped, notwithstanding the variety of opinions which prevailed, that there would be this night an unanimous decision for the question, and thereby shew that high sense of justice and humanity, for which this country had always stood pre-eminent.

Colonel TARLETON declared, that notwithstanding all the violence with which this motion was supported last year, notwithstanding the indefatigable exertions of the junto since that period, which were fully evinced by the pile of petitions that had been placed upon the table, he should not shrink from the question, but proceed to argue against a speculation which, if carried into effect, must eventually prove destructive to the interests of this country; being firmly convinced that humanity, to become laudable, should be tempered with justice.

The Colonel then proceeded to observe, that he did not consider it necessary, after the thorough investigation which this question had undergone, and the adjudication it received from a respectable majority last year, again to enter into all the minutiae, which are necessarily implicated in so important a debate, and which have been already so amply discussed; but should content himself with touching upon the different prominent features, and never lose sight of that philanthropy which the abolitionists fallaciously esteem to be their vantage ground on this occasion. As one of the representatives of a great and flourishing commercial town, as a friend to the rights and properties of many thousand of manufacturers, merchants, and planters, and an advocate likewise for humanity, good policy, and justice, he would proceed briefly and clearly to state those

arguments which occurred to him against the abolition of the African trade.

I shall not now, observed the Colonel, notice the origin of the trade ; the sanction it has received from Parliament, the state of ignorance in which the natives of Africa are involved ; the horrid despotism which pervades it, in consequence of that barbarism ; or compare the wild government of the West Indies with the savage tyranny of the Kings and Princes of Africa ; but endeavour to point out the impolicy and impossibility of abolishing the African trade.

The different states of Europe are, and have been for ages past, solicitous to increase their commerce, their colonies, and their slave trade ; and by experience have found, that the prosperity of all depended upon the success of each.

I need not enumerate the Portuguese, the Danes, the Dutch, the Spaniards, and the French, who were reported in this House to have been on the start to outrace us in the suppression of the slave trade, but who, by authorities which I have now in my hand, are actually foremost for its continuance and extension. It is apparent, therefore, as I had the honour, on a former occasion, to remark to this House, that if we were disposed to sacrifice our African trade, other nations would not enter into so ruinous a plan. The French, for instance, depend greatly on their West-India trade as a source both of revenue and navigation ; (I have it not now in contemplation to expatiate on the situation of St. Domingo ; to that I shall presently advert) will they suffer a trade, upon which their whole commerce turns, to languish ? No ; they would thank us for our mistaken ideas of humanity, and they would profit by them, the disadvantage would be ours ; the advantage would be theirs ; and the condition of the African would be exactly the same, whether he crossed the Atlantic in an English or any other European bottom ; and should we persist in so wild a project as abolition, the continent will soon be supplied with English houses, English ships, and English capitals.

Having stated the present situation of Europe, with regard to the African trade, he thought it did not require much penetration or judgement to detect and expose the fallacious doctrine of those sectaries, who would attempt to abolish, what other nations encourage and protect. A portion of common sense,

which, in general, contributes more to the public good than sophistry or enthusiasm, and which frequently disperses the mists which eloquence, prejudice, and fanaticism, endeavour to raise, to cover their own purposes, enables the majority of this House, and of this country to declare, that an abolition on the part of England alone, will not abolish the trade in general.

The Colonel then remarked, that unless a place of congress should be appointed, and unless all the nations of Europe accede to such a proposition, and enter fully into the project of abolition, we only create difficulties and embarrassments for our merchants and manufacturers, without effecting any other purpose. Nay, perhaps our present wild, fanatical manner of conducting this speculation, may alienate the affections of our colonists, who, through a deluge of blood, may work out for themselves another independence, or may throw themselves into the arms of those confederated states, whose constitution tells us, that they have a sacred regard for public faith, and private property.

Though I sincerely wish, said he, for the honour of human nature, that an eternal veil could be drawn over the recent horrible transactions in St. Domingo, I cannot help noticing some circumstances, because they seem to originate in the same principles and practices which some people in this country have lately adopted, with regard to the West-India islands. I shall not attempt to describe the barbarities and horrors of those scenes which have been displayed at St. Domingo, a bare recital of which would make an impression upon the hardest heart, and most inaccessible understanding, without the assistance of pathetic eloquence, or laboured ingenuity. I shall therefore turn the attention of the Committee from a contemplation of rapes, of conflagrations, of impaled infants, and acts of parricide, and endeavour to paint concisely, the impolicy, as well as danger, of our now pursuing the object of abolition.

Partial extracts of the debates of this House, and the garbled statements of evidence, which have been so industriously circulated, both in this country and through all the colonies, have created alarm and distrust throughout every island in the West Indies. All the letters from that quarter of the globe speak most forcibly of the mischiefs and dangers that may arise, and

which actually threaten the white inhabitants. I have, within this last week, received a letter from a respectable officer at Antigua, describing the sickly situation of the King's troops, owing to the frequent detachments required from them; in order to awe, or suppress insurrections amongst the negroes throughout the different islands. Government has been made acquainted with these circumstances, and the perils which consequently impended; and to relieve the minds of the colonists, and to counteract the absurd vote of the Minister, that very Minister has been compelled to send a reinforcement of infantry, and a regiment of light dragoons; the vote of this night may require additional troops, and if this chimerical project is to be revived every year, the army of England may be fully employed in the West Indies.

On the subject of the petitions which have been lately presented, I must beg leave to observe, that though I entertain the highest respect and veneration for the petitions of the people of England, I cannot yield my admiration on the present occasion, because I think that their sentiments have not been fairly collected. The form and language of the petitions bear too strong a resemblance to each other; they appear to be the manufacture of the sectaries of the Old Jewry; and the signatures do not stamp them, in my mind, with any additional credit or authority. Unexpected and unsolicited letters have lately poured in upon me, from the most respectable individuals, in all parts of England, describing the various artful modes adopted, for obtaining and creating signatures; and to an honourable Member now in my eye, I am indebted for an extensive correspondence, even in the remotest parts of Scotland.

In some villages and towns, mendicant physicians, and itinerant Clergymen, have exercised almost unexampled zeal and industry, and displayed the ingenuity of Scapin to extort names from the sick, the indigent, and the traveller: in others, the grammar schools have received ceremonious visits from the indefatigable emissaries of the abolitionists; and the boys have been indulged with the gladsome tidings of a holiday, provided they would sign their own, and the names in the neighbourhood; and when, on examination, the inhabitants could not furnish signatures sufficiently numerous, they have been de-

fired to employ their imagination, to give to "airy nothing a local habitation and a name!"

The Colonel then adverted to the letters in his possession, to support what he had just advanced, and, among them, read the following extracts:

" Warrington, March, 1792.

" Sir,

" Having with pleasure frequently observed, that you are
 " the Champion for the trade of Liverpool, I beg leave to
 " communicate to you a piece of intelligence I lately pick'd
 " up, on my return from a journey to Manchester, relative to
 " the mode pursued by the partizans for the abolition of the
 " African trade, in order to procure as many names as they
 " can to their petitions. I fell in company with a very re-
 " spectable tradesman of Warrington, who told me he had a
 " son just returned from school at Bolton; where a petition to
 " Parliament for the abolition had been industriously handed
 " about, to obtain the signatures of all ranks of people, from
 " the highest to the lowest; and that, in order to procure all
 " the names, they possibly could, real or imaginary, they
 " waited on the school-boys and not only got them to sign their
 " own names, but also as many more names of their neigh-
 " bours as they could recollect; some of the arch boys (of less
 " retentive memories) perceiving that those boys who could
 " recollect the most names met with the greatest applause, in
 " order to receive a proportionable share of praise, first signed
 " their own names with others they did recollect; after that
 " they invented new names, and put them down also. Any
 " comments I could make on such petitions being considered
 " as the sense of the people of Bolton, &c. to you would be
 " superfluous; I only give you the fact, which I consider as
 " my duty, as a well-wisher to the merchants and trade of Li-
 " verpool, to inform you of: therefore hope you will pardon
 " the liberty I now take. I am,

" With the greatest respect, Sir,

" Your most obedient,

" humble servant,

" —————."

He said he had the original letters in his possession, but did not feel authorized to publish the names of the writers.

“ Chester, March 30, 1792.

“ Honoured Sir,

“ Knowing there was a petition carried on here for the abolition of the slave trade, signed by a number of names, a great number of which, I thought, was very improper should be sent to that honourable House of which you are a Member, as it was chiefly children belonging to the different schools in this city; amongst the rest, it was brought to the school of which I am a scholar, and was signed (by desire of my master) by every boy in the school that could write his name, myself excepted.

“ Yours respectfully,

“ ————.”

Relative to the signatures of the boys, the Colonel referred to the following passage in a letter from Sheffield :

“ You have time to establish the truth of it by enquiry, before the matter is discussed, or by a line addressed to

“ The Rev. CHARLES CHADWICK,
“ Master of the Grammar school.

“ Rev. MATTHEW PRESTON,
“ English Grammar school.

“ JOHN EADON, Master of the free writing school.

“ Or most of the other Writing school-masters in this place.”

The Colonel observed, that he would not tire the patience of his hearers by reading letters in his possession, written by respectable individuals resident at the following places :—
Portsmouth, Ipswich, St. Andrew's, Carlisle, Dorchester, Swansea, Culoofs, Manchester, Edinburgh, Hull, Chester, &c. &c. &c.

The Magistrates of the places, continued he, whence these extraordinary petitions have originated, have seldom been approached. The Town-halls have still more rarely had these

petitions displayed in them, in order to await the deliberation, the decision, or the signatures of the grave, respectable, and informed part of the community. No, Sir; parts of the flimsy hearsay evidence, which for a length of time oppressed and disgraced the table of this House, were mutilated, distorted, and reduced to the size of pamphlets, in order to promote their circulation throughout all the alehouses and Excise-offices in this kingdom, where the unwary and uninformed were tricked out of their humanity, by inflammatory extracts; and from such sources most of the petitions, which I had almost said disgraced the signers and the receivers, have been produced!

Great God! exclaimed the Colonel, is this a decent, honourable, or decorous manner of ascertaining, or shewing to the world the sentiments of the people of this country? No, Sir; it is equally an insult and a mockery upon the people and Parliament of England.

He then adverted to the difference of the evidence brought before the Privy Council and the Select Committee of the House, by both parties, previous to the discussion of last year. I need not, said he, stigmatize the abolitionists, by mentioning the names of the generality of their evidences: nor need I say any thing more in eulogy of the principal evidences brought forward by the merchants and planters, than merely repeat the names of Lord Shuldham, Admiral Barrington, Admiral Arbuthnot, Admiral Edwards, Admiral Hotham, Commodore Gardner, Lord Macartney, Lord Rodney, Sir Ralph Payne, Sir J. Dalling, Sir Archibald Campbell, Mr. Baillie, Mr. Hibbert, and a long list of other respectable characters.

If I was to analyse the bulk of the evidence, I should exhaust the patience of the Committee, in contrasting the ignorance, the malice, and fanaticism of some, with the veracity, the ingenuousness, and the candour of others. In short, I should exhibit, if I gave a true picture, a variegated view of the fair and foul principles which dignify and debase the human mind.

The Colonel proceeded to reply to that part of Mr. Wilberforce's speech which more immediately affected the merchants of Liverpool and Bristol, and observed, that no small degree of satisfaction resulted to his mind from the opportunity the honourable gentleman had afforded him of justifying a respectable

body of his constituents. He has been pleased, said he, to enlarge upon the losses sustained on the passage from Africa to the West Indies. Notwithstanding his calculations, his fabrications, or his comments, I can pledge myself to this House, and this country, in asserting and maintaining, that the average loss per cent. does not exceed four and a half, since the regulations were imposed on the slave ships. And if we advert to the voyages of the King's troops, or the transportation to Botany Bay, the comparison is highly favourable to the African trade.

Another assertion of the honourable gentleman's I beg leave likewise to repel. He still chuses to enlarge the mortality amongst the seamen, and from thence draws an inference prejudicial to the town of Liverpool and city of Bristol. For the former of those ports, (and we may fairly conclude that the same trade is conducted in the same manner at the latter) I must again repeat what I had the honour to deliver to the House last year, as there is no event has since occurred which gives me reason to doubt its veracity:—"The Liverpool African
 " trade is, in proportion to the number of hands it employs,
 " the most productive nursery for seamen that belongs to the
 " commerce of this country. For admitting for a moment the
 " exaggerated calculations which have gone abroad, of the
 " mortality of the seamen employed in this trade; admitting
 " that 642, out of 3170 persons, die in the voyage of one
 " year; admitting farther, that half this mortality falls upon
 " that half of the crew which is composed of seamen and offi-
 " cers, and consequently that 321 seamen perish in the course
 " of one year's voyage, yet as 1585 landsmen from the single
 " port of Liverpool alone, in spite of that fabricated morta-
 " lity, contributes annually, by means of this trade, an aug-
 " mentation of 943 persons to the navy of Great Britain."

I shall not trespass on the patience of the Committee, farther than making one more observation on the honourable gentleman's speech, in which there is so little novelty. He was pleased to say that white people, and the sailors in particular, could work in the West Indies. In answer to that assertion, I shall refer to what I deem good authority—the testimony of many respectable officers. It would be tiresome to enumerate the names of all the officers who have served in that part of the

world; for they generally, I believe, without a single exception, maintain the truth of what I advance. If he does not like naval or military authorities, I will indulge the honourable gentleman with other proofs of my assertion. It has been found by experience, that the natives of Europe could not endure any labour under the intemperate heats of the West Indies. Frequent attempts have been made to cultivate estates with white labourers. In this experiment the French are said to have lost 12,000 whites in the year 1763. The Assembly of Jamaica offered great encouragement, in the year 1749, to induce white families to settle in that island, but of the few that went, in ten years there were no remains.

With respect to the value of the African and West-India trade to this country, examined either separately or connectively, no person has yet presumed to doubt the benefits derived from them. The manufacturers and merchants of this country find their interest materially allied to the existence of the former; and though the honourable gentleman who moved this question on a former day, was pleased to style the African trade "a lottery at Liverpool," it has been found by experience to be generally a profitable concern, and that the morals and fortunes of the individuals who enter into it, are not so much debased and ruined as those of many of their neighbours, by their connections with the state lottery of this country.

He then took a very general view of the consequences which must necessarily result from the honourable gentleman's proposition, if carried; and stated, that by an abolition, several hundred ships, seven thousand sailors, and some millions of industrious mechanics, would lose their employment, and be rendered worse than useless; for a sudden chasm of this sort would undoubtedly be productive of the most dangerous consequences to society.

A yearly deficit of six millions, which is the lowest average, admitted by all sides of the House, and which would fall on the manufacturers, ship-builders, and a large body of the working people, would be sensibly felt in this country, though her industry and commerce flourished almost beyond calculation. And if we add to this defalcation of our commerce and revenue, the loss of our colonies, which are estimated at seventy millions, which, from the best authorities,

are totally dependent on the African trade, what new discovery or contrivance is to remedy an evil which would passy the very existence of the national prosperity?

The opposition to the question now before the House (continued the Colonel) is so connected with the well-being and good government of this country, that if I was an enemy to the constitution of England, which has been the work of ages, and which, though a good, all must acknowledge to be a very complicated, machine, I would vote for the abolition of the African trade. It certainly will be allowed, that a government, constituted like the one we now enjoy, is a new work in the annals of mankind. The great extent of commerce and credit, and the stupendous national debt, which overshadows the revenue of Great Britain, are circumstances to which we can find no parallel in history. Through the medium of science, and the extension of labour and manufactures, we are enabled to penetrate into every country, to become the merchants of every state, and the citizens of every clime.

To our commercial success, therefore, we may fairly attribute the great increase of power, wealth, and consequence; and our public and national debt has unfortunately, whether from error in Government, or not, I will not pretend to decide, kept pace with that power, that wealth, and that consequence. If, therefore, we attempt to circumscribe the means which have enabled us to arrive at the summit of commercial prosperity, shall we not endanger our constitution by rashly drying up the sources which swelled the tide, and gave rapidity to the current of our commercial importance and national revenue?

I need not enter into a minute description of the African trade, or the origin of the national debt. If either were to commence *de novo*, there would not be found in this House, or in this country, a more strenuous opposer of such speculations; but circumstanced as we now are, it is the interest and duty of every good citizen, not to oppress the main spring of Government, but to facilitate, and regulate its movements with care and circumspection. But if we violate the sanction of Parliament, and touch the vitals of our commerce, with a

rough and injudicious hand, we endanger the existence of our present constitution. By the moderate and prudent interference of this House, the African trade, if mal-practices exist in it, may be meliorated; by timely reformation we may correct the abuses in Government, increase the general prosperity of this country, and restore and invigorate the powers of the Legislature. But if, with an imprudent temerity, we daringly strike at the root of our commerce, we undermine our present advantages, destroy our future expectations, and the representatives of the people will be guilty of suicide upon the laws, the prosperity, and the constitution of England.

Mr. MONTAGU began with bringing to the recollection of the House, that on a former occasion, when his honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) had introduced a motion for the abolition of the slave trade, he had abstained from troubling the House with any argument. For, however anxious he might be to testify his opinion, and to prove that he had formed a judgement not more firm, than candid and deliberate, on the subject, yet knowing, that from the ardor with which he had entered on the pursuit, and from the many hours he had been induced to spend upon it, he might be suspected of an intemperate zeal, and of somewhat of the feelings of a party, he had been willing to yield his station in the contest to those who might be supposed to come with cooler imaginations, and had tied himself down in the situation of a spectator to an attentive consideration of the arguments adduced on each side of the question. It was in this position that, divesting himself, as far as he could, of all he had thought before upon the subject, and giving a candid entertainment to the objections of the adversary, he had been more than ever confirmed in the soundness of his principles, and in the opinion of the policy, as well as justice, of the abolition. It was now then no longer in his power, consistent with the duties he owed to his country, to justice, and to humanity, to refrain from uttering what he conceived to be his unalterable sentiments upon the subject; and he entreated the House to believe, that it was in discharge of that duty he addressed them; and not from any impertinent desire of obtruding himself on their notice. But before he entered on the argument, he wished to obviate a prejudice that was

entertained against the friends of an abolition of the slave trade, who are accused of proceeding in a rash and precipitate manner to their conclusion, upon abstract and impracticable grounds, and of insisting on an absurd extreme by abolition, while they reject a wise, temperate, and practicable medium by regulation. To do away this prejudice, he was desirous of offering some preliminaries to the adversary, which might serve as a just point of reference between them. All he should require on their part would be to concede, that in the slave trade there exists a great evil, which must of necessity be remedied, and that the means of remedy ought to be such, as would be effectual to the object, and not an idle mockery and delusion. In return for this concession, he was ready to admit, that inasmuch as it is the duty of legislators to remedy existing evils, and those evils particularly of the most extensive and pernicious influence, it is no less their duty to apply that remedy in the least hazardous manner the nature of the evil will admit; and to feel themselves responsible, that the hand of the physician should be the hand of a friend, and not the rash interference of an empiric. He hoped that House would feel, that while he offered these principles as a standard by which to measure all he had to say on the subject, he was desirous to establish a fair and impartial criterion between the two parties. With the impression of the latter strong upon his mind, he should proceed to argue the question, and to lay before the House the reasons which convinced his mind, that no regulation, short of an abolition of the trade, would be effectual; and that a regulation by any of those means which alone could be thought likely to have any effect, would prove infinitely more dangerous to the security of the planters, both in their persons and property, than the abolition. He should not make any effort to prove, that the application of any regulations to the original grievance on the coast of Africa was impossible, because the truth there appeared so obvious, that he might almost take it as a concession of the opponents. For how was it possible to ascertain the justice of the captivity of each individual whom we forced away into bondage? Could we establish tribunals all along the coast, and in every ship to inquire into the offences committed by each slave, and into the legality of the punishment? What judges could we find for such an office? But admitting, for the argu-

ment sake, that we could invent such a tribunal, as might ascertain the right of the seller to the persons of those who were enslaved on the coast, what expedient could we imagine to bring evidence of the justice of the captivity, of by far the greater number, who were brought from great distances inland? The impossibility of such regulations was so clear, that he should not waste time in proving it. But before he passed to another part of the subject, he wished the House to pause, and recollect, that if it were indeed impossible to do away the evil of this part of the trade, how strong, how evident, how invincible ought to be the necessity to be pleaded for the continuance of what is irremediably unjust in its foundation! Mr. Montagu said, he should not dwell much upon the proof of the inefficacy of regulations as to the Middle Passage. His honourable friend had shewn, that however the mortality might be abated on most of the ships, by the regulations of Sir William Dolben's bill, yet wherever a contagious distemper happened to break out (and such in many instances must always be expected,) the greatest part of the cargo was swept away, and the average of deaths was by these instances still kept up to a shocking and enormous height. What he principally desired to inculcate, was the impossibility of applying regulations in the West Indies, without more danger to the persons and property of the planters, than would accrue by the abolition. This part of the argument he was particularly desirous to enforce, because he knew, that upon this, and upon the state of the population in the islands, the whole measure must rest with those to whom he must look for a majority; with the persons who admitted the injustice of the trade, but who believed, or at least feared, the danger and impolicy of an abolition. His first position here would be, that no regulations could be rendered effectual to the protection of the slave in the West Indies, which did not admit the evidence of the negro in a Court of Justice. His second, that to admit the evidence of a negro in a Court of Justice, would be infinitely more dangerous to the persons and the property of the planters than the abolition of the trade. In the first place, he would wish gentlemen to consider what was to be done by regulation for the protection of the slave? Should it be enacted that the punishments be moderate? That the number of lashes be limited? The Colonial Legislatures had already done as much

as the magic of words alone could do upon the subject. Yet the evidence upon the table uniformly tended to prove that in spite of this law, the only protection of the slaves depended upon the clemency of the master; because the whites being one or two in number on a plantation, the offence, however atrocious and inhuman, existed not within the eye or reach of the law, though committed in the presence of an hundred slaves. Besides, that by splitting the offence, and inflicting the punishment at intervals, the law is evaded, although the fact be within the reach of evidence, by the accidental presence of a white man. Mr. Montagu here adverted to the evidence of Captain Cook of the 89th regiment, and of Chief Justice Otley, as to this point; the former relating a shocking instance of reiterated punishment, in contempt of the law, within his own knowledge; the latter declaring, that "he can devise no method of bringing a master, so offending, to justice, while the evidence of the slave continues inadmissible." But let councils of protection, and guardians of the slaves be appointed to watch over their welfare, and to restrain the master. This again was a well-sounding expedient; but nugatory and absurd in practice. For what persons resident in the islands would be found, to whom they could intrust that important and troublesome office, with a hope of a faithful discharge of its duties? Who was there, not only in the islands, but resident on every particular plantation, who would risk the comfort of his life by the exercise of so invidious an interference? But granting that men of such exalted and active beneficence could be found in the islands, as to sacrifice all their time, and all the friendship of their equals and associates for the good of the slaves; what could they effect? Suppose the honourable gentleman who brought forward the motion were deputed, an unwelcome, indeed, but in all probability a very vigilant guardian of the slaves, what protection would the law enable him to afford to the slave? Could he be present at all times, and at all places, at once? That would be a task too arduous even for his active philanthropy. Yet if that were not the case, the offence to be redressed by him would require to be proved to him; and the same difficulties of proof would stand in the way of the guardian, as of any other tribunal. Mr. Montagu went more at large into the proof, that all regulations were ineffectual, short

of the admission of the slave to give evidence. He then proceeded to prove, that to admit the slave to give evidence in their present state of civilization, would be of the most dangerous consequence to the safety and the property of the planters; that to admit the slaves to any of the rights of citizens, where they so greatly out-numbered the whites, would be to make them in effect the masters. One gentleman (Mr. Vaughan) had said, the slaves might be admitted to give evidence, leaving it to the judges to give weight, according to their discretion, to the depositions. Mr. Montagu said, he confessed this appeared to him to be fraught with a most hazardous principle of discontent; for how were the negroes to be persuaded, that it was fit they should be admitted to speak the truth, and then be disbelieved and disregarded? What a fermentation must such a conduct naturally excite in men dismissed with injuries undressed, though abundantly proved in their apprehension by their testimony? If then it be proved, that no regulations were likely to be effectual, and it had been admitted, that the evil called in an imperious and irresistible manner for a remedy, Mr. Montagu said, there was no expedient left but an abolition. That an abolition of the trade would not only be effectual, but safe, and even beneficial to the planter, had been irrefragably proved by the calculations of the state of population by a right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) to which no answer had been even attempted to be given. And until such an attempt was made with success, he wished such gentlemen (who he feared were many) as came down to vote with a slight view of the subject, upon the assurances of some of their friends (perhaps interested) who said that it was a dangerous expedient to abolish the trade, would consider seriously how they could reconcile their conscience to justify and continue the most horrible cruelty and injustice, upon a political necessity, not maintained except by assertion, but refuted in the calculations, and abandoned in argument even by those whose authority they meant to follow in their decision. Mr. Montagu concluded with addressing himself to two descriptions of persons with what he admitted to be only an argument to their discretion, but with what appeared to him to be a very forcible consideration, and one which in wisdom ought to have great weight and influence their conduct. He wished the planters to con-

sider the great increasing progress which the opinion of the injustice of the trade was making in the nation at large, as manifested by the petitions, which had almost obstructed the proceedings of the House, by their perpetual introduction. They must begin to perceive, that it was no longer possible to stifle the business in the birth, and that offended Justice would at length, with an uplifted arm, break down all opposition, and that the minds of the representatives would be found in union with the opinions of their constituents. It was now, therefore, for them to save their credit, and to take care that the retribution to the injured Africans should not be made without their concurrence. The other description of persons whose attention he requested (and whom he had reason to believe to be a large body) were such as had been led to ascribe the agitation of this question to the same spirit of abstract and impracticable equalization, which they dread to see applied to the destruction of order and good government in our invaluable constitution. If there be any persons with this apprehension, they would do well to consider whether they had not better be in haste to destroy that association, and by separating the real evil from the imaginary grievance, to destroy the credit which the latter may derive from being connected in opinion with the former. If they neglected to remedy a most abominable and crying abuse against which every feeling of reason, religion, and even political wisdom, revolts with abhorrence, did they not play into the hands of those, who construed their dread of innovation on other occasions, into an obstinate resistance of truth, justice, and expediency? Mr. Montagu sat down, with repeating a profession he had formerly made, that he would never cease to promote the abolition of the slave trade, with every faculty of body and mind, till the injuries of humanity were redressed, and the national character relieved from the deepest disgrace that is recorded in the annals of mankind.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, the arguments adduced to prove that the trade was either founded in justice or in policy, had so completely failed, that he could not hesitate a moment in the vote he was to give. Were it possible for him to conceive, as some of the advocates for the trade endeavoured to prove, that the negroes were rescued from torment or from death in Africa; that they were transported in the most commodious manner to

the happier climate of the West-India islands ; that there, instead of painful and extorted toil, they passed the day in healthful and easy labour, the evening in chearful and innocent recreation, retired to rest with bodies unfatigued and hearts at ease, and rose alert and vigorous in the morning, to pursue the same course ; were he to believe that in sickness they were attended with tenderness and care, and that their old age was worn out in peace and plenty—even then he should vote for the abolition ; for no practice could reconcile to his mind that which was fundamentally and in principle wrong. His objection to the trade was, that man was bought and sold ; that he was torn from that country allotted to him by nature for his habitation and support ; that man was consigned over to the disposition of man ; and where man was delivered over to man, there must be tyranny on the one hand, and a deep sense of injury on the other : it was the quality of despotism to corrupt the heart, and without the aid of such corruption, many there must be among so great a number of despots by nature unfeeling and cruel.— But there was a fatality attending the arguments of those gentlemen who defended the slave trade ; so that in their very defence itself, they unavoidably let fall some expressions which were conclusive against themselves. Those who wished to represent the condition of the slaves in the fairest point of view, had convinced him of the existence of cruelties disgraceful to humanity. In an account of selling off the stock of a plantation, it was said, that the slaves fetched less than the common price, *because they were damaged*. Damaged ! How damaged ? What was this but an admission that they were worn down by labour, sickness, or age ; and that instead of receiving the indulgence their situation required, they were to be transferred from one task-master to another, the latter, perhaps, more inhuman than the former. It was said by the ingenious author of a pamphlet on the subject, in the course of describing the happy situation of the negroes in the West Indies, that a good negro needed no character, for that fetters would gall, and the whip make weals ; and the slave who bore not the marks of either, had certainly never deserved the punishment. Then it must be true, that fetters and whips were the instruments of punishment, and that both were inflicted, till the marks of the galling and the weals became indelible ; and that

not from punishment inflicted upon fair trial and conviction, but at the arbitrary, uncontrolled will of a master. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Vaughan) who had declared himself to have been, at an early period of his life, a friend to the abolition of the slave trade, had gone to the West Indies to inform himself of their situation, and in consequence of what he had seen there had changed his opinion, whose arguments in his speech had all tended to support the trade, but who had declared in his explanation that he would never himself be possessed of a slave, and would even lay down his life to procure the abolition of slavery, had said, notwithstanding his surprise at the goodness of their situation, "that the negroes were *all* poor." What was this but saying, they were a degraded and miserable race? He had also said, "put slavery and cruelty out of the question, and they were as well or better off than most European peasants." Slavery and cruelty!—What but slavery and cruelty do the advocates for the abolition wish to put out of the question?—that slavery and cruelty, whose inevitable effect it is to sink man below the dignity of his nature, till he seem at length hardly to belong to the same species. The honourable gentleman had said, that in general he had observed great resignation among them. What did resignation itself imply, but great foregone and present misery? What is it to be resigned, but to have got over the first ecstasy of despair? He had related a circumstance, of which he himself had been an eye-witness. The overseer upon one of his father's estates, in reprimanding the gang for not having done sufficient work, had used this argument: "What did your master buy you for, but to work?" and with this they seemed perfectly convinced and contented. Good God! had wretches who were in a situation to bear with such arguments as this, appeared discontented, what could we suppose would have been the rejoinder to their arguments, but the whip. The petitions against the trade were said to be got by collusion, and to be signed only by ignorant persons, but evidence that was entitled to still less credit, since it came from persons whom the gentleman to whom it was addressed did not even know. He could answer, that the petition from his constituents was signed by persons as well informed as any among them. That they were so much alike, was no argument against them; for they had but one

plain tale to tell ; and that they told it pretty nearly in the same way, was rather a test of truth than a proof of collusion. The supporters of the abolition had been charged with enthusiasm. He was as strenuous a supporter of that measure as the honourable gentleman who moved it, but he had never entertained, any more than that honourable gentleman, the doctrine invidiously imputed to him, an immediate emancipation of the slaves in the islands. The state of degradation to which we had reduced them, had rendered them unfit for the immediate enjoyment of so great a blessing ; to attempt such a thing would be an act of insanity indeed ; but he trusted that as soon as the abolition was determined upon, some gradual but efficacious means would be adopted, to do that which it was impossible to do at the moment. Was this a proof of fanaticism, or of cool and moderate inquiry ? As to the commercial part of the question, whether the abolition of the slave trade would prejudice the commerce of this country ? he was of opinion that it most indisputably would not ; but he would not detain the House by going into the argument upon that subject ; it had been so ably proved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the last year, and that proof had remained so perfectly unshaken, that he should only weaken by attempting to add any thing to it. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Bailey) who spoke early in the debate, has hinted something about the union of two great orators upon this occasion, and had attributed that union to the eloquence of the honourable mover of this question. He certainly had paid too great a compliment to the eloquence of that honourable gentleman : not his persuasion and ability, but the truth and force of the thing itself, had convinced and united them ; and having formed his opinion upon the subject, if he could wish for any adventitious circumstance to corroborate that opinion, it should be that two men, eminent above their fellow-citizens in ability, disagreeing upon the generality of important subjects, had, upon this, zealously co-operated and joined the whole force and splendor of their talents. He disclaimed all exultation on the calamities of St. Domingo. If there were any persons who felt such exultation, let them be pointed out, in order to be driven from the society of those who supported better principles on better grounds. But he denied that these calamities were owing to the debates on the slave trade.

They were owing to the trade itself. There was a point of endurance, beyond which human nature could not go, and the mind rose by its native elasticity, with a violence proportioned to the degree to which it had been depressed. Whence did the negroes in St. Domingo learn the cruelties they had practised? whence, but from those on whom they had practised them? Had not Africans organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? were they not hurt by the same weapons, subject to the same disease, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as Europeans were? If you pricked them, did they not bleed? if you tickled them, did they not laugh? and if you wronged them, would they not revenge? If they were like you in the rest, they would resemble you in this also. The cruelty you had taught them, they would practise. He feared it was beyond human ingenuity to better the instruction.

Mr. VAUGHAN said, he had stated circumstances in favour of the trade, which he thought it of importance to the House to know, but he had not said that these were to govern his opinion.

Mr. MILBANKE said, that with regard to the abolition of the slave trade, the policy of the measure was as great as its justice was undeniable. Where slavery prevailed, every operation that was performed, was done in a rude and unworkmanlike manner, and no substitute for manual labour, no artificial means of expediting work, alleviating its trouble, and shortening the time of finishing it, were introduced, or even thought of. Where slavery existed, Mr. Milbanke said, there must be oppression, and in his opinion the planters were bound to thank those who had warned them of the more than probable dangers that would one day ensue from the resentment of their slaves, against those whom they could not but regard with an inimical eye, and consider as their tyrants. He concluded with declaring that he would vote for the motion.

Mr. DUNDAS said, that when the question was agitated in the House last year, he happened to be prevented by indisposition from giving any vote or public opinion upon it. His honourable friends, however, with whom he might be supposed to have the most intercourse, had very well known that he had long entertained the same opinion with regard to the abolition

of the slave trade, though he had differed from them as to the mode of effecting it. He had felt equally warm with themselves in the pursuit of the general object, and he felt so at that moment; but it was right to see how far it might be proper for him to give his assent to the particular proposition made by his honourable friend. One set of gentlemen, the honourable mover and his supporters, had spoken, without reserve, not only for the abolition of the slave trade, but for an immediate and precipitate abolition; those on the other side had unequivocally argued for the continuation of the African slave trade, as essentially necessary to the West-India islands; they had set no limits to the continuation of that trade, but laid it down as a proposition, that in order to maintain our commerce with the West Indies, the importation of new slaves from Africa must be continued for ever. With respect to the material parts of his argument, he agreed with his honourable friend. He thought, with him, that the African trade was not founded in policy; that the continuation of it was not essential to the preservation and continuance of our trade with the West-India islands; that there was no mortality in that quarter that was incurable, and that the human race might not only be maintained, but increased, in the West-India islands. In all these great leading questions he concurred with his honourable friend. It might then be asked, Do you not agree to the abolition of the trade? He answered, that neither did he differ with him in that opinion. But he could not help doubting as to the prudence or practicability of the mode of abolishing it, proposed by his honourable friend. When he talked of direct abolition, he would submit to him, whether he did not run counter to the prejudices and habits of life of those men who are most deeply interested in the question; prejudices of men interested in the trade, it is true; but surely, if it were possible to effect the same object, without raising any extraordinary apprehensions on their part, with respect to their great and important interests, it was more prudent to take that mode, and so to form the proposition, as to relieve their minds from any apprehension of injury. Was his honourable friend also perfectly sure, that in his zeal for one great object, he did not run counter to another equally important? he meant the sacred attention Parliament has ever shewn to the interests of individuals:

whatever idea men might then have of the African trade, certain it was, that those who had embarked their capitals in the cultivation of the West-India islands, and lent their money upon West-India property, had done it not only under the sanction, but the solemn invitation, of Parliament; Parliament, undoubtedly, might think it right to depart from any principle it had adopted, again and again, as it appeared upon their statute books to have often done; it might be wisdom to do so; but sure he was, it was their duty to recollect, in carrying their plans into execution, under what circumstances the property had been employed, and whether they had invited the individuals to embark in it. He meant not to urge an argument which had been reprobated again and again in the course of the debate, that if they gave up the trade, other nations would not give it up; their duty did not depend upon the conduct of others. But in case other nations took up the trade, might they not defeat the object of his honourable friend?—Might not British subjects in the West Indies be supplied by vessels from Eustatia, or some other neutral port? What was to prevent an Ostend or Dutch merchant from carrying slaves from Africa to the West-India islands? Gentlemen might make light of that argument, if they pleased; but he should be glad to hear an answer to it. He stated it in this view, and on this ground only. In his opinion, Mr. Dundas said, there was a possibility of avoiding those objections, and at the same time of not running directly contrary to the prejudices he had mentioned as existing in the minds of the West-India merchants. It was in the shape of regulations only that they could totally abolish the African slave trade; and not less speedily, nay, even more speedily, than in the manner which had been proposed. He did not mean to say, let the trade continue for ever! In his main principle he agreed with the honourable gentleman; but he repeated, it was in the shape of regulations that he thought they might procure the abolition in the most direct manner.

Mr. FOX asked Mr. Dundas to what regulations he referred?

Mr. DUNDAS said, first to regulations the most forcible and efficacious, in order to promote the increase and encouragement of the breed of native negroes in the West Indies.

Secondly, to every species of general regulation, with a view of putting an end to hereditary slavery, and relieving the condition of the slaves. He alluded also to regulations for the education of children; a point that must greatly facilitate the total annihilation of the slavery of these children. Without such regulations as those, the abolition of the African trade would fail, in his opinion, of procuring the effects expected from it. Those who contended that the cultivation of the islands could not be continued without a continuance of the slave trade, he begged to reflect on the gradual means he proposed. His object was gradually and experimentally to prove the practicability of the abolition of the African trade, and to provide the means of cultivation, to increase the population, and to evince that all the alarms which were now entertained of danger from the measure were ill founded. The arguments of his honourable friend, and the gentlemen opposite, great as their talents were, he contended, were only founded on theory. In mentioning the abolition of hereditary slavery in the islands, he did not mean, Mr. Dundas said, that the son of an African slave should procure his freedom by the death of the parent: but that being born free, he should be educated at the expence of the person importing his parents, and when arrived at such a degree of strength as might qualify him to labour, he should work for five or ten years, or whatever period it might be, to defray the expence of his education and maintenance. It was impossible, he said, to emancipate the present slaves at once; nor would their immediate emancipation be of any immediate benefit to themselves; but that observation did not apply to their descendants, if trained and educated in the manner he had suggested. If he gave his assent to the motion, Mr. Dundas declared, it was an assent that led to nothing but a general proposition, the mode of carrying which into effect might be settled hereafter. He did not adopt any one extreme in the question.

Mr. Dundas begged the indulgence of the House while he addressed himself to those who had maintained that it was absolutely necessary for the cultivation of the West-India islands to maintain an importation of African slaves as usual. He entreated them to give a serious consideration to that point. He apprehended they could not think he assumed too much, when he said, that if both slavery and the slave trade could be abo-

lished with safety to their property, it deeply concerned their interest that the cultivation of their islands should be carried on by freemen rather than by slaves. This general proposition, he took it for granted, that nobody would controvert. He need not illustrate the proposition; but requested the Committee to look to the whole of the evidence before them on the state of those very slaves. That they were ill used he did not mean to lay to the charge of the West-India Planters; individuals indeed not possessed of humanity might treat the slaves ill. The honourable Member who first spoke that night, had informed them, that the Planters were in general disposed to pay much regard to their slaves, and that from conscience, as well as from a principle of interest. He believed that many respectable owners in the West Indies take great care of their negroes.— But would not the same principle teach them how unseemingly the cultivation by slaves was, if it were possible to be effected by freemen? There would be some inconsistency in the conduct of Parliament, if they should take measures for the abolition of the trade, without at the same time taking that under consideration also. God forbid that he should limit the philanthropy of his honourable friends, or that he should entertain the smallest wish to insult the degraded shores of Africa. It was something anomalous that the people of this country, who were themselves free, should carry on a slave trade with Africa; and it was something anomalous also that they who enjoyed the full benefits of freedom, should ever think of introducing cultivation in the West Indies by slaves and not by freemen. Mr. Dundas appealed to all who were informed on the subject, and to Mr. Long in his History of Jamaica, in support of his argument, that the evils which are complained of in the West Indies, arise entirely from the newly imported slaves, and when it was said that the negroes imported were those who were condemned for crimes committed in their own country, he begged to ask, whether the West Indians chose to depend on fresh supplies of those men for the cultivation of their lands, and the security of the islands, when it was also found that every insurrection had arisen from those very persons? The safety of the West-India islands, he contended, was concerned in the question; there would, he said, be danger of fresh struggles so long as an abolition of the trade was refused; they were by those

importations bringing upon the West-India islands the engines of their own destruction. Mr. Dundas begged to call upon the gentlemen to give a serious consideration to the question, to consider whether they would not act more judiciously, and for their own interest, if they concurred in the opinion of putting an end to the trade, instead of standing up for the system of perpetual importations. What right, he asked, had they to suppose, that the coast of Africa was for ever to remain in its present state of barbarity? If once a Prince of an enlightened character should rise up in that hemisphere, his first act would be to make the means of carrying off all slaves from thence impracticable. What reason had they to suppose the light of Heaven would never descend upon the continent of Africa? From that moment there must be an end of African trade. The first system of improvement, the first idea of happiness that would arise in that continent, would bring with it the downfall of the African trade, and that in a more effectual way than if done by regulations of this country. He did not allude to the petitions in one way or other. Perhaps the question did not require much additional force from them. Many of them might be produced by anxious solicitations, and emissaries sent about for the purpose; and many of those who signed them had not perhaps been very much versed in the nature of the question, and had not reflected whether the trade should be abolished gradually or immediately. It was not upon the petitions that he was desirous of founding any observations; but he wished to observe, that the idea of the impolicy of the African slave trade had long been entertained by the most enlightened understandings of this country, as well as the idea of its injustice. It had made a deep impression on the minds of enlightened men in this country, that the trade was obnoxious to a thousand perils and dangers. If that was the case, was it a prudent thing to rest on that trade for the farther improvement and cultivation of their property? He really spoke with a view to their own interest. He had so often seen imaginary apprehensions entertained on such subjects, that he was satisfied in a few years they would set this question at rest, and that the West-India proprietors themselves would become of his opinion.

There was a species of slavery, Mr. Dundas observed, prevailing only a few years ago in some of the boroughs in Scot-

land. Every child that carried a coal from the pit, was the bound slave of that borough, and their emancipation was thought by Parliament to be material, and very much agitated in the House. It was urged, that let every man's genius be what it might, yet in those works (the work, from its nature, being carried on under ground) it was quite an excepted case, and without this principle of slavery, the collieries could not be worked; that the price of coals would be raised to a most immoderate height, and all the neighbouring manufactories which depended on them would essentially suffer in their interests. After several years struggle, the bill was carried through both Houses of Parliament. He was old enough to remember the dispute: within a year after, the whole idea of the collieries being hurt by the abolition of that sort of slavery, vanished in smoke, and there was an end of the business. An honourable gentleman had also told them, what formed another argument to the same point, that the regulation of the Middle Passage had had a salutary effect. The present alarms, he observed, were not more lively than those which were expressed when that bill took place. The ruin of the Liverpool and Bristol trade was foretold. Yet now one of the representatives had come forward, and plainly said, "Our alarms were ill-founded, our apprehensions were without ground; we found fault with all your regulations, we ascribed every mischief to them, whereas we find by experience that they have been attended with every benefit."—Was he then asking too much, when he asked for a candid consideration of the real grounds of the present apprehension? Perhaps the West Indians might find, that the best thing they could do, would be to close in with his proposition, and that they would not act more wisely and prudently for themselves, in maintaining the continuance of the trade with Africa, as at all times necessary for the preservation, improvement, and cultivation of the West-India islands. He was far from flattering himself that any thing he had said could at once eradicate prejudices that were deeply rooted, and bring over men to a set of altogether new ideas; but he meant to propose a moderate and a middle way of proceeding. If therefore there was any great body in that House, any respectable number of persons, who were of opinion with him, that the trade ought to

be ultimately abolished, but by moderate measures, which should not invade the property of individuals, nor shock too suddenly the prejudices of our West-India islands, he wished them to connect themselves together, and he would venture to say, that gentlemen of that moderate or middle way of thinking, might then reduce the question to its proper bounds, and maintain the principles of abolishing the slave trade in consistency with their other principles.

Mr. ADDINGTON (the Speaker) said, that professing himself to be one of those moderate men alluded to by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas), he could not forbear giving way to the impression made upon him by his forcible manner of stating the argument, which had relieved him from the utmost anxiety. Conceiving the question to be deserving of the most serious investigation, and deeply considering the importance of its object, he felt, had long felt such a mode of treating it as being much to be desired, because he thought that it would facilitate the attainment of that end, which he was confident every one wished to be attained with as little injury as possible to private property. The fear of injuring private property had hitherto restrained him from expressing his opinion against a system which he could not prevail on himself to permit or countenance. The slave trade he abhorred; but he did not conceive the specific manner offered to the House last year efficacious, and had therefore not adopted his honourable friend's mode of abolishing the trade. His aversion to the infamous system was the result of those solid principles so eloquently and forcibly stated by his honourable friend, and did not arise merely from an inspection of the evidence on the table. Mr. Addington said, he remembered, on its being imputed to a noble and learned Lord, some years since retired from the Bench, when at an early period of his life, he was employed against the rebel Lords, that he had not used strong language sufficiently towards them in proportion to their crime; the noble and learned Lord had well answered "that he pitied the loyalty of that man, who imagined, that any epithet could aggravate the crime of treason:" he in

like manner begged leave to declare, that he knew of no language that could add to the horrors of the slave trade; it was equal to every purpose of crimination, to assert, as the honourable gentleman opposite to him had most eloquently done, that thereby, one individual is made subject to the despotism of another, that man is to be bought and sold. On every discussion of the subject, he had felt a great difficulty: on one hand, it was impossible not to condemn the trade, and to consider the rights of justice due to the multitude whom it renders miserable; and on the other hand, it was to be remembered, that there were a description of persons, who had likewise strong claims on the justice of Parliament. The question, in his mind was not so much, whether it would be carried on by this or that foreign country; but whether this nation should continue it under circumstances so very offensive, as the present. The number of Africans at present in the islands, he thought insufficient for maintaining the stock, and therefore he did not approve of the idea of there being no more importations whatever. It had been forcibly argued, by his honourable friend who opened the debate, that according to the disproportion of sexes, which had appeared, the supply of negroes in future must be continually increasing, and that in a very few years, every difficulty would be entirely surmounted; if that were conclusive with respect to Jamaica, it did not, Mr. Addington thought, apply to the other islands; nor did it appear to him that the circumstance, stated by his honourable friend, was to be depended upon for furnishing so effectual an increase of population, as a plan for providing the islands with a sufficient additional number of females. The total disregard of religion and morality, that characterised the negroes at present, if corrected by properly regulating their manners, would infallibly tend to decrease the fears of those under whose protection they were, and unite all more closely as members of the same society. Till that were done, importations appeared to him to be necessary. He had despaired of these considerations being attended to by Gentlemen of sufficient weight, or with the autho-

rity of official information, who would digest and bring them forward. Except with respect to the granting liberty to the children born on the islands, he did not conceive that the right honourable gentleman's plan could be considerably amended; the trade, Mr. Addington thought, ought to exist a few years longer, perhaps for a period of 8, of 10, or 12 years, under such regulations as should satisfy the minds of those who contended for an immediate abolition, inasmuch as they should be favourable to the immediate interests of the negroes, and to their future happiness. One regulation especially he should propose, and that would be, to subject the males to a heavier duty than the females, and by that means occasion a greater importation of the latter; a measure, that would tend to increase their numbers to a degree, that would soon render the number of the sexes equal. Another mode would be, that of granting land or money to those who should rear a certain number of children, and giving premiums to those who should introduce machines of husbandry. Intimate and unreserved as was the communication he enjoyed with his right honourable friend, the subject of debate never having been the topic of their conversation, he was ignorant of the extent of his ideas relating to it; yet he was persuaded, his right honourable friend would not have offered his observations to the Committee, without meaning soon to submit to their consideration some specific motion on the subject, of substantial reform, and ultimate abolition. He could not, however, but recollect the ground on which his honourable friend had argued the question, which he had moved. He had invariably wished for the accomplishment of the same object with him, though he trusted that his honourable friend's mode would not be adopted: he meant that of an immediate abolition of the slave trade, as it was called, though it certainly did not merit that name. Prudent regulations, by which it would very soon be destroyed, would not only be productive of great benefits to this country, but would indisputably be a blessing to the West-India islands; and he was sure that they were as anxious to ob-

tain the object, as the Committee could be, provided no material injury were done to their essential interests. He had little more to offer to the Committee, and had it not been for the circumstance of his right honourable friend, who had spoken last, having brought forward a proposition, which so completely coincided with his own ideas on the subject, he should not have thought it necessary to deliver any opinion in the debate. With respect to his honourable friend who introduced the business, he trusted that he would not regard any thing he had uttered, or meant to say, as addressed personally to himself; but as his honourable friend had fully explained his intention to be an immediate abolition, though his motion did not, perhaps, express it, he could not but think, that it would be dealing more fairly with the Committee to have inserted that idea in explicit terms. Being aware of his intention, he could not allow himself to support his motion; but he consoled himself with the hope, that a measure would very speedily be brought forward, which he should be able most cordially to support and approve.

Mr. FOX declared, that, though what had been said by one right honourable gentleman must carry with it more weight than any thing he could offer on the subject, yet he had heard it with infinite uneasiness instead of any satisfaction; and he could not but observe, that he had never felt a more severe, or more efficacious resistance to his honourable friend's motion. Without questioning the seriousness of the honourable gentleman, something had been said so much more mischievous, and something so much more like a foundation had been laid, not only for permitting for years to come, but suffering, that detestable traffic, to continue perhaps for ever, that he could not but plainly state the grounds upon which he acted in a business so truly important. He deprecated, in strong terms, every deception and delusion on the country, and he conceived that to be delusive and deceptive, though perhaps not meant to be so, which prevented the Committee from seeing the business in its true light; from seeing what alone was and must

be the question; whether that execrable slave trade was fit to be continued, or must be abolished? The honourable gentlemen called themselves moderate men; but he neither felt nor wished to feel any thing like moderation upon the subject. He considered the idea of continuing the slave trade as nothing else than an idea of continuing the encouragement of the crimes of robbery and murder, and those under circumstances of perpetration the most flagitious and atrocious. The mention of moderation in the case before them, reminded him of a passage in Middleton's Life of Cicero; the translation, though deficient, was equally applicable to his present purpose; the passage was, "to break open a man's house and kill him, his wife and family in the night, is certainly a most heinous crime, and deserving of death, but even this may be done with moderation." If any idea could be more absurd than that he had just mentioned, it was that of the slave trade being carried on in moderation. If to break into a single house, and rob and murder a single man, could not be done in moderation, with what moderation could a whole country be pillaged and destroyed! He never could consider the question as one of simple justice: it was, he said, only whether they should authorise by law, respecting Africa, the commission of crimes, for which in this country, they would be liable to incur the severest penalties, and even to forfeit their lives in the most ignominious manner. Bad as was the proposition, he should have liked it better had it been more specific. He noticed the terms in which the trade had been reprehended by the two last gentlemen who had spoken, and asked, where was the proof that they would ever vote for the abolition of it? He challenged them to produce arguments in support of the traffic, if any could be urged in support of a traffic so execrable, and to shew how a law could be tolerated, which was diametrically opposite to all law whatever? For his part, he was equally an enemy to all their regulations, regulations as disgraceful as they would be impotent. The right honourable gentleman who led the way in this new plan of moderation, proposed that hereditary slavery should

be abolished, but the mode was curious. The child was to be free born, instructed in the principles of freedom, for he was to be instructed in the duties of religion, which inculcate a rational freedom, and when these principles might be supposed to have taken root, he was to pay for those principles by becoming a slave. Such were the charms of liberty, that the very idea of attaining it one day or other, sweetened the nauseous draught of slavery; but that a person should purchase slavery at the expence of freedom, was inverting the order of things indeed.

The other gentleman (the Speaker) proposed that a premium should be allowed for the transportation of females. Was the kidnapper to be encouraged to lay the snare for the unsuspecting maid, to snatch her from the arms of her lover, or her parents, or to transfer the mother from the embraces of her spouse to the arms of him between whom there could be no attachment, but that sympathy which arose from captivity? He should like to see the clause by which this inhuman measure was to be presented to the Parliament of England. He should like to see the man with a mind capable of conceiving words to frame such a clause. Was there a gentleman in the House bold enough to support it? For the honour of Parliament, he hoped that there was no such man.

When he considered, that the present was not a question of moderation, but of justice, he expressed his surprise that gentlemen should entertain the smallest hesitation. The Speaker had very laudably reprobated the trade with the utmost abhorrence, and yet refused to support the original motion. Did the vote to which they were called, pledge them to any particular system of abolition? No. Then why not pass the resolution now, and object to and amend any future motion?

He exposed in the same way the regulations of Mr. Dundas, who wished to begin by emancipation, instead of abolishing the trade; who called a mere regulation of trade an invasion of property, and who himself proposed the very extinction of that property in the first instance. One honour-

able gentleman, the only one who had acted with fairness on that side, had declared that he resisted those who condemned the trade, and that he thought that it ought to go on. In fact those who had spoken most directly against the abolition, had conceded in substance, though not perhaps in words, as much as those who were for gradually abolishing the trade. One honourable gentleman had declared it to be his intention gradually to abolish it, by meliorating the state of the negroes, and thus rendering it unnecessary; the honourable mover of the business however had said, with much more wisdom and practicability, "I will gradually produce the abolition of slavery, by immediately abolishing the trade. I will continue to promote my plan, till the object shall be accomplished!" With respect to infringement of private property, they surely, Mr. Fox said, might prohibit the commission of crimes without thereby being chargeable with taking away the property of the West Indians, which certainly it was not their intention to do. He condemned and ridiculed the idea of the children of slaves being born free, and then serving ten or fifteen years to requite their masters for the expence of their education, and after that becoming free in fact. Could any man imagine, that a person was better qualified to enjoy freedom, after servitude of so long a period, than if he had continued free from his birth? Oh, but say the advocates for continuing the trade, we do not mean to urge the question chiefly on these grounds. We talk of the impolicy of renouncing the measure, when it will immediately be adopted by some other European Power.

With respect to the probability of other nations supplying the islands with slaves, clear he was, that it had better be by any nation than by this. He would rather that the colonies should be supplied by all the nations in Europe, than that the British name should be sullied by such abominable practices. It was begun to be seen, Mr. Fox observed, that the trade was inconsistent with justice. An honourable gentleman, who had spoken early in the debate, had acknowledged that many enormities subsist-

ed, and were proved by the evidence ; but he had asked, would it be fair to take the character of this country from the records of the Old Bailey ? He was not at all surprised that when the subject was mentioned, the Old Bailey should recur to the honourable gentleman's recollection. The honourable gentleman had, however, forgot the essential difference between the two cases ; when they learned from the Old Bailey records that crimes had been committed in this country, they at the same time learned that they were punished with transportation and death : when they heard of crimes committed in the slave trade, they found them passed over with impunity, or even the objects of reward. There had been an accusation urged against the Committee which sat in the Old Jewry, for having distributed copies of the evidence ; he had the honour to be one of that Committee, though, perhaps, from some other avocations, not a very constant attendant, and his advice had ever been to distribute them as largely as could be done ; for he heartily wished that there should not be a man in the nation, who could read, but should see the evidence before the House, since he was sure that it would produce on the country, that effect which he trusted it would ultimately have on the House of Commons, and ensure the immediate abolition. It had by some been objected, that part of the evidence was given by poor people ; he knew not that poverty and veracity were incompatible. At least, the evidence of the poor was as good as that of the correspondents, whose letters had been read by his honourable friend, (Col. Tarleton) who had acknowledged that he did not know who his correspondents were. He noticed the mention made of Lords Rodney and Macartney, Admirals Edwards and Arbuthnot, &c. &c. who, he observed, had spoken of the West Indies only, and could have no other knowledge of the slave trade, than that which might be obtained from a perusal of the evidence. All that they had said had been merely negative, whereas the evidence of the other persons, less affluent perhaps, and less dignified, was positive.

and uncontradicted. As to the mode of procuring slaves, even his honourable friend near him (Col. Tarleton) had not said that there was any thing like fairness in it; in his mind, the least disreputable way of accounting for the supply, would be to represent them as having been legally convicted of crimes. If, however, the number should prove it to be impossible that they all could have been convicted of crimes, that pretence must fall to the ground. The whole number, he stated, to be above eighty thousand annually! Could such a number be supposed to be convicts? And even were that the case, it could not but be considered as rather condescending in this country, and rather new also, to take on itself the task of transporting convicts from other parts of the world, and those parts barbarous! Were France or Spain to proffer such an office to this country, they would scarcely know what terms were adequate to express their sense of the insult; but for the petty states of Africa, they accepted it with satisfaction and pleasure. As for the specific crimes for which the negroes were convicted, of witchcraft especially, they entertained so sacred a horror, that being unable to find objects at home, they made, as it were, a crusade to Africa, to express their indignation at the sin. With respect to adultery, to be sure, they did not go to Africa, because the crime was not to be met with in this country; their aversion, however, to that crime was such, that though it might be thought somewhat severe, lest it should escape punishment, they degraded themselves into executioners—of so despicable a nature must be the best possible defence of which that execrable traffic would admit.

Last session, we were cajoled, and taught to believe that something would be early brought forward. Have we not passed a year, and nothing has been done? Are we to be still deluded and betrayed? All our promises are vanished into smoke and air, and the Africans continue to be oppressed, plundered and murdered. It is exceedingly hard, that because we suffered our credulity to be

imposed on last session, we should this day be insulted by a similar mode of subterfuge. Why was not the system of moderation proposed then? Why were we not entertained by the proposition for a gradual abolition? He feared that had not the question been renewed, this measure of gradual abolition would never have been mentioned.

Mr. Fox then proceeded to a statement of facts. In one part of the evidence, they found that a well-known black trader brought a girl to a slave ship for sale; some persons afterwards went on board, and discovered the girl; they learned who the trader was that sold her, and went and carried him to the ship, and sold him for a slave. "What!" said the trader, "do you buy me, grand trader?" "Yes," replied the Captain, "I will buy you or any one else; if they will sell you, I will purchase you." On the first view of this fact, it appeared to be a piece of most bare-faced villainy, but on examining the subject, it would be seen that what had happened in that case was, and ever must be, the common and ordinary conduct that resulted from the very nature of the trade. How could the Captain know or decide who was the real owner of the girl? He had given the same answer in that case as he must give in every instance, namely, "I cannot know who has a right to sell; it is no affair of mine; I cannot enter into these controversies. If any man offers me a slave, my rule is to buy him, and ask no questions." That such was the method of carrying on that execrable traffic, and that perpetual wars were created for the purpose of supplying the European slave trade, were indisputable facts; and he challenged any man to controvert them. He then called the attention of the Committee to what had happened in the river Cameroon. That affair, he said, came out upon an action tried before the Court of Common Pleas, on the 1st of March last, before Lord Chief Justice Loughborough. It was brought by one Macdowal against Gregson and Co. for wages due to the

plaintiff. The facts were directly in issue, so that the Committee, by a strange fortuity of events, had a judicial proof of the whole transaction ; containing, among others, the following important circumstances :

A Chieftain, of the name of Quarm, whd meant to execute his revenge upon the slave Captain for the savage violence that he had before committed, went to him, and said, " I want to go up the country to make trade, you will help " me by giving me some arms and gunpowder." The proposal was directly agreed to. Had the Chief meant to decieve the Captain, when he made this proposition, he would have used some sort of art, and not have offered a proposition so extraordinary that it would alarm the Captain's suspicions. He would have mentioned some reason for his proposition that was common and natural ; his plea, therefore, of borrowing arms to make trade (that is war for trade) was the natural plea, and therefore succeeded. It was so usual that the Captain immediately consented, as it were, through habit, to grant his requisition, which he himself declared, he had often granted before, and through the success of this fraud his destruction was accomplished ! In short he again and again called on any man to shew how the trade could be carried on, but by such means as those, for which, if a man were to practise them in this country, he would be punished with death. The advocates for the abolition of that abominable trade, were accused of enthusiasm : were they, he asked, enthusiasts, or fanatics, because they cried, " do not rob—abstain from murder !" If by the term enthusiasm, was meant zeal and warmth, he was free to acknowledge that he was an enthusiast, and his enthusiasm was that zeal and warmth which arose from a sense of justice, and was of that kind which made men act with energy in a noble cause ; it was a zeal and warmth which he trusted he should always possess, and without which nothing great and praiseworthy, had ever been effected since the creation of the world. In such energy they prided themselves, and gloried. He could not admit of any compromise on the subject ; for there could be no compromise between guilt and injustice. Mr. Fox vindicated Mr. Wilberforce from the charge of unfairness in not having ex-

preſſly ſtated the full extent of his meaning, and ſaid, that though his words had not pointed out immediate abolition, he had openly avowed that to be his intention, and the motion itſelf was unobjectionable, inasmuch as he had aſſured them, that when he ſhould bring in his bill, he ſhould leave it, liable to amendment, though it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the honourable gentleman would be diſpoſed to fill up the blanks in the manner correſpondent to his own ideas. The queſtion then, Mr. Fox ſaid, was only, whether the Houſe were ready to declare, that the ſlave trade ſhould be aboliſhed at ſome period or other ; ſome might be for ſix years ; ſome for twelve, and others for ſix months, but all who were for the abolition at all, ought certainly to vote for the motion. When the bill came into the Committee, any gentleman might move for a ſhort period ; for his part, he thought it ought to be immediately. Some might think of 2, 3, 6, 10, or 20 years ; in his mind, it might as well be a thouſand. Thoſe who were againſt the immediate abolition, he remarked, ſeemed to incline to give weight to the majority of laſt year ; whereas by the means he propoſed, they would put an end to that majority. He had hoped, that they would have done ſomething even in the ſmalleſt degree towards obtaining the object ; but thoſe hopes had entirely failed. An honourable gentleman had ſaid, that they would ſoon find the trade aboliſhed : he believed ſo too—petitions had been preſented to the Houſe, whoſe prayer could not be reſiſted, and the Public, who had been enlightened by the evidence, and by the publications of the ſociety in the Old Jewry, had ſhewn a ſolicitude and zeal on the ſubject, which could not fail of accompliſhing its object. He was old enough to recollect ſupporting petitions on a variety of occaſions, and knew not on what principle they could be ſpoken of ſlightingly, unleſs where actual evidence could be brought of improper practices, ſuch as forged names, or of men having been led by fraudulent means to ſign them. Of this he was certain, that the table was never loaded with petitions, but where the people of England felt an actual grievance, and where the Houſe ought to feel itſelf bound to give a remedy. One honourable gentleman had ſaid, he had letters to ſhew, that ſome of the

petitions contained false names; how did he know, but that the letters themselves were false? It was absurd to suppose, that such a number of petitions from all parts of the kingdom could have been fabricated: if they were, why had they not as many fabricated for the preservation of the trade? So they might, the honourable gentleman had said; but the people on their side of the question would not condescend to use such means. If any slave traders, or Captains, could have been found base enough to sign false names to petitions, or to ask others to sign them on false representations, they might, the honourable gentleman had said, have had their table covered with petitions on their side of the question; but the reason that they had none of their petitions, was, that detection would have been easy. It must be equally easy to detect any forgeries that might be committed on the side of the question on which he spoke. Gentlemen had said that there was no necessity to adopt violent measures on the occasion, for that the slave trade would soon arrive at a natural period by the civilization of Africans. It was, he contended, impossible; as long as that accursed traffic continued, there could be no civilization. That was, Mr. Fox said, the very refinement of cruelty; they created every kind of immorality, and rendered the people savages, and then said, those men were so savage, that it was bettering their condition to transport them as slaves to the West Indies.

Mr. Fox mentioned St. Domingo and its late disastrous situation. The recent unfortunate occurrences there arose from the oppression of their masters having rendered the slaves cruel and ferocious; and he warned the Committee of the danger of similar events happening in our islands, unless the slave trade were abolished. He took notice of Mr. Long's History of Jamaica, in which that gentleman expresses the propriety of prohibiting the farther importation of negroes, inasmuch as almost all the mischiefs committed in the islands, were committed by the new slaves. The abolition of the slave trade, by rendering the masters more kind in their treatment, would not only do away apprehensions of insurrection, but have a farther good effect on even our own islands; and when that happy change should have arrived, they would, he observed, be able

to depend on the Creole blacks for the defence of their country, as much as on the whites themselves. He might be asked, why are you so tender of the negroes in the West Indies, and so regardless of their African brethren? He did not ask for any tenderness to the people of Africa; he only begged them not to rob and murder them, to gratify their avarice. There was an argument which had not been used at all, but which was the foundation of the whole business; he meant the difference of colour. Suppose, said Mr. Fox, a Bristol ship were to go to any part of France, where the utmost fury of civil war is reported to prevail, and the democrats were to sell the aristocrats, or *vice versa*, to be carried to Jamaica, or any other island in the West Indies, to be sold for slaves; such a transaction, he imagined, would strike every man with horror, and why? Because they were of our colour. On that point, he would quote no less an author than Aristotle, who, deep as were his researches in general, and acute as were his observations, yet in regard to that matter says, "The Barbarians, (many of whom were of the same colour) are of a different race of mankind, and born to be the slaves of the Greeks." Were the present race of man more wise than he, asked Mr. Fox? He believed not. Could any justification be offered for such a practice, that genius, he thought, would have been the first to discover it. Aristotle saw domestic tyranny exercised in an extreme degree in a State, where political tyranny would not have been endured, and being unable to account for it on any principle of reason, but seeing that such was the practice, and a practice too universal to be successfully opposed, he therefore endeavoured to persuade his countrymen, that as the Barbarians had been conquered by them, they were of an inferior species, and destined to be the slaves of the Greeks.

Such a custom could not be now tolerated; and as to the pretext that what would be great cruelty to us, who profess strong feelings and cultivated minds, would be not injurious to those who were ignorant and uncivilized, it was the height of arrogance, and the foundation of endless tyranny. Mr. Fox noticed the mention that had been made of the transportation of convicts to Botany Bay, and said, that the hardships of the passage would appear less extraordinary, when it was known that the transportation was undertaken by slave mer-

chants and slave captains, and that a part of the misery of the convicts was the effect of slave-fetters being used instead of those employed in general for convicts. The matter, he trusted, would be taken up seriously by Government, and properly examined into. To prove that wars were made solely for the purpose of obtaining slaves, he related a story, which, he said, he had read long before any question was agitated. It was that of an African, who had been educated in the Mahometan religion, and taught both to read and write. He was a man of letters, and of the first rank ; but was taken in one of those wars, and sent on board an English trader, by which he was conveyed to Maryland, and fortunately sold to a humane master, who transmitted his case to England, where it was taken into consideration, and he was in consequence redeemed and sent home to Africa. Had this man, with all his learning, and other advantages, fallen into the hands of a common master, he might have worn out his life in that Egyptian bondage that puts an end to thousands. Upon the whole, he should give his opinion of the traffic in a very few words. He believed it to be impolitic ; he knew it to be inhuman ; he was certain it was unjust. He thought it so inhuman, that, if the plantations could not be cultivated without it, upon the principles of justice and humanity, they ought not to be carried on at all. Were the objects even brute animals, no man would expose them to be treated with such wanton cruelty. If the objects of the traffic were wholly inanimate, no honest men would engage in a trade founded on principles of injustice. Upon these grounds, therefore, he stated there was a necessity for putting an immediate end to it.

As soon as the amendment had been stated by Sir William Dolben from the chair,

Mr. DUNDAS rose to explain, but chiefly to bring his proposition to a point, by inserting the word "gradually" in the amendment, which he moved accordingly.

Mr. JENKINSON commenced his speech, by expressing the regret he felt, whenever he differed from those with whom he was in the habit of acting ; but he should think he was acting inconsistently with that duty which he owed his constituents and his country, if, after having formed a decided opinion on so great and important a question as that

which was then before the House, any motives whatever should prevent him from delivering that opinion, and from supporting it with such arguments as might appear to him decisive on the subject.

In rising to oppose the propositions that had been made, he felt that he laboured under every possible difficulty. He rose, not only to oppose a measure, generally believed to be popular, but which was supported by a greater combination of abilities than was ever united on any one subject, on which a difference of opinion could reasonably exist. Feeling, as he did, his own inability to contend with the right honourable gentleman who had spoken last, all that he could do was, to call the attention of the House, as briefly as possible, to what he conceived to be the real state of the question; and he hoped that the Committee would be influenced in their decision, rather by the weight of argument, than by any ingenuity or eloquence with which it might be supported.

He proceeded to observe, that the opinions of those who were adverse to the abolition, had in general been unfairly stated. It had been circulated that their opinion was founded on principles of policy, as opposed to principles of humanity; on no such ground was he disposed to resist the abolition. If it could be clearly made out that the interests of humanity were decidedly in favour of the proposition, Heaven forbid! Mr. Jenkinson exclaimed, that any motives of policy should prevent our adopting it. But if, on the contrary, it should appear, that the cause of humanity was, in fact, against the abolition, he trusted then that the very same principles which would in the one case have induced the Committee to adopt the proposition, would then induce them to unite with him in opposing it. He desired, however, to be understood, when he said that the cause of humanity was against the abolition—if the question was not, Whether the trade was originally founded in injustice and oppression? He admitted it was. The question was not, whether the trade was abstractedly in itself an evil. He admitted it to be so. But whether, under all the circumstances of the case, any considerable advantage would arise

to a number of our fellow creatures, from the abolition of the trade taking place in the manner in which it had been proposed?

The subject, he observed, from the manner in which it had been treated, naturally divided itself into three points of view.

1. The situation of the negroes on the coast of Africa.
2. Their situation in the Middle Passage.
3. Their situation in the West-India islands; and how far, in each of these respective situations, their condition was likely to be benefited by the measure which had been proposed?

Disposed as he might be, not entirely to agree with the statement that had been made, of the situation of the negroes in Africa, it was not his intention to rest any argument on that ground. He was ready to admit that their situation was miserable, that their miseries were in a great measure occasioned by the slave trade, and that if that trade was universally abolished, very great benefit would consequently accrue to the inhabitants of Africa. No person would, however, pretend to assert, that whatever may be the calamities suffered by the inhabitants of that continent, those calamities arise from the trade, as carried on by Great Britain only. Other countries must, of course, occasion as much of those evils as we do; and if the abolition of the trade on our part should prove only the transfer of it into the hands of those countries, very little benefit could accrue to the negroes from our humanity.

What then, is the probability of our example being followed by those countries who have a considerable share in the trade? Five years have now elapsed since the disposition of a considerable part of this country has manifested itself in favour of the abolition. Sufficient time, then, has been given, to enable us to judge whether other countries are likely to second our efforts.

Have the Portuguese shewn any disposition to follow our example? Far from it.

Have the Dutch? He was very much misinformed if there were not agents from Holland at this very time in this country who were negotiating with persons concerned in the trade, and who were desirous of giving all possible encouragement to them if we should abandon it.

Have the Spaniards?

On the contrary, it will appear that they immediately took advantage of our disposition, and gave every possible encouragement to the trade, by offering a bounty on the importation of slaves.

Have the French?

They who have carried fanaticism, and their ideas of liberty, to an extent as yet unheard of; have they shewn any disposition to imitate our conduct in this particular?

The measure was certainly proposed in the National Assembly, but was rejected; nay, not only rejected, but the bounty on the importation of slaves, as an encouragement to the trade, has been continued.

He said, he should not have been surprised if some of these countries had thought it politic to pretend to have a similar disposition with ourselves, and after having induced us to abolish the trade, they had availed themselves of our disposition to humanity. But when they have not only shewn no disposition to abolish, but, on the contrary, every disposition to encourage it, he had a right to infer, that the abolition of the trade, on our part, would be only the transfer of it into the hands of those countries.

On great political questions, where important interests are involved, it would in general have been thought sufficient to be able to prove, that no benefit was likely to arise to those to whom we were desirous of affording relief; but if he could proceed farther; if he could prove, not only that no advantage, but that a great disadvantage would arise to the negroes, from the measure that is proposed, no doubt could then remain on the mind of any person, who did not prefer speculative to practical humanity, respecting the propriety of rejecting it.

The mortality on board the English ships trading from Africa was, previous to the regulating bill, four and an eight per cent. Since that, it had been reduced to a little more than three per cent.

The mortality on board French ships trading from the same quarter is near ten per cent.—so that there is a mortality of nearly seven per cent. more on board French, than on board English ships.

The mortality in Dutch ships is from five to seven per cent.

The mortality on board Portuguese ships is less than either on the French or Dutch ships, but more than on English ships, since the regulating bill.

Let us then, he observed, consider, what would be the consequence of the abolition of the trade on our part.

Do we regret the deaths, do we regret the cruelties that are said to have been committed? Those deaths, and those cruelties would be more than doubled if we were to abolish the trade.

Suppose the case, as it really stands, was to be submitted to the Africans? suppose we were to consult their inclinations on the subject, what do we believe would be their answer; miserable as to them the trade might be; numerous as the calamities they suffer from it? “If other countries
“are not disposed to unite with you in abolishing it, for our
“sakes do you continue it; for whatever may be the evils
“we suffer from it, the trade carried on by other countries,
“when compared to the trade carried on by you, is as evil
“when compared to good.”

He was ready to admit that there was one answer, which would probably be made to this.

Great Britain trades not only for her own islands, but in some degree for those of other countries. No good, but, on the contrary, evil, would be the consequence, to those negroes which we carry into the foreign West-India islands. But as the trade between Africa and our West-India islands would then be stopped, and, as consequently a smaller number of negroes would then be wanted, than those

which are demanded at present, some degree of good would accrue to the people of Africa from the abolition of the trade on our part.

In answer to this argument, he observed, that as the West-India planters purchased negroes at present, notwithstanding the greatness of their price, he had a right to infer, that they thought it for their interest to purchase them, and that consequently, even after the abolition of the trade on our part, they would not fail to purchase them. The point then to be considered was, what is the probability of their being able to smuggle?

The Committee may, in a great measure, judge of this from the evidence already before them.

By the evidence it appears that a great number of slaves have been clandestinely stolen, from time to time, out of our islands, and carried into the foreign West-India islands. It appears that several hundreds were stolen, within a very short period, from Jamaica, and carried into Cuba. These facts, he observed, might surprise the House, as it was clearly the interest of all the planters to prevent the smuggling, if possible. But if other countries were able to smuggle slaves out of the island, when it was the interest of every planter and overseer to prevent that practice—it follows, that there would be very little difficulty in smuggling slaves into the islands, where it would be for the interest of every planter and overseer to promote it. The consequence then, he said, of the abolition of the trade on our part, would be only the transferring it into the hands of other nations, who would carry it on at a much greater disadvantage to the Africans, and who would acquire the advantage and profit to themselves of supplying our islands with slaves.

The attention of the Committee, he proceeded to observe, was next called to the state of the negroes in the West-India islands; and much had been said under this head; of the cruelties they suffered, and of the hard labour they were obliged to undergo. Tales of oppression had been told, and narratives of ill usage had been related, which must undoubtedly shock the feelings of all who heard them; but

was it fair, he asked, to infer from extraordinary instances, the general bad usage of the slaves? Suppose that in the best cultivated government, a collection was to be made of the different abuses and cruelties that had been committed for a series of years; suppose that in this country such a collection had been made, and after the brilliant panegyric that was made some time ago on our excellent constitution, some person had risen up, and had stated these, as proofs that our constitution was very different from what it had been described; should we have thought ourselves justified in inferring from a certain number of extraordinary instances, that we lived under a government oppressive and tyrannical? Should we not rather have answered, that in the most perfect system which the human intellect is capable of forming, some weaknesses, some defects must necessarily exist; and that it was unfair to draw inferences from extraordinary examples, to the prejudice of any system whatever? Having put this in the strongest light, he said, he had a right to draw the same inference with respect to the state of the slaves in the West-India islands, who, from being slaves, were necessarily exposed to certain peculiar disadvantages. He had a right to draw that inference, provided he could prove, that, notwithstanding any particular exception, the general behaviour of the planters or overseers towards the slaves, could not have been such as the friends to the abolition had described it to be.

Evidence has certainly been adduced, on both sides, and he should not be afraid, if it were necessary, to oppose the evidence of those who have appeared in favour of the planters, against any evidence which had been adduced on the other side. He should not be afraid to oppose such characters as Lord Rodney, Admiral Barrington, Admiral Hotham, Sir Joshua Rowley, &c. against any authorities, however respectable, who may have come forward in favour of the abolition. But on no such evidence was it his intention to rest the argument; there were facts in support of that evidence, which must leave it without doubt on the minds of the Committee.

Previous to the year 1730, the mortality, and consequently the decrease of the slaves, in the West-India islands, was very considerable.

From the year 1730, to the year 1755, the deaths were reduced to only two and a half per cent. more than the births. From the year 1755, to the year 1768, they were reduced to only one and three-fourths more than the births. From the year 1768, to the year, 1788, they were reduced to only one per cent. This then, on the first view of the subject, must prove that whatever may have been the situation of slaves in former times, their condition has been gradually improved.

But if we consider the peculiar disadvantages under which they labour, if we consider the small proportion of females with respect to males, the hurricanes, and famines which have been the consequence of those hurricanes, and which have swept away, in a short period, thousands of lives; if we considered thus, that every natural obstacle seemed to combine to prevent the increase of the slaves, we must have judged it physically impossible that they should have increased in the manner, and to the degree to which they have increased, if the cruel treatment they had suffered, and the hard labour imposed upon them, had been such as the friends of the abolition had represented.

This statement, he observed, not only enabled him to justify the West-India Planters from the aspersions that had been thrown out against them, but enabled him likewise to draw still more important conclusions; That as the slaves in the West-India islands had, under the present state of things, gradually increased, they would continue to increase. That very few years would pass, not only before the births were equal to the deaths, but before they were more numerous than the deaths—That if this was likely to happen under the present state of things, *à fortiori*, it would follow that it must take place, if, by certain regulations, the increase of the imported slaves could be encouraged.

Mr. Jenkinson having argued this important part of the subject in the most forcible manner, then proceeded to

remark, that the only doubt which could remain on the minds of gentlemen, was, whether it were more for the interest of the planter to import, or breed; for if he should be able to prove, that it was more for the interest of the planter to breed, it would then follow, that the moment the stock of slaves in the islands was believed by the planters to be sufficient, that moment the farther importation must necessarily cease.

In the first place, the gradual increase of the slaves, of late years, clearly proved that the increase had been encouraged by the planter, and consequently must have conceived it to have been his interest to breed.

But he meant not to rest the argument on that ground.

The price of slaves was of late years become so great (nearly, he believed he might say, twice as great, as they were twenty years ago), that the planter, on the grounds of œconomy, would feel it his interest not to purchase, if by any possible means he could avoid it.

Let us consider, then, said he, that the greatest mortality is on the newly-imported slaves—that the diseases they bring with them from Africa, the diseases they are likely to contract on the passage, the operations they have been said to undergo in the seasoning, all prove the considerable risk there must be in the purchase of slaves, and that the planter is not only put to a very considerable expence, but is put to that expence, with a chance of very speedily losing the fruits of it.

To these considerations others might be added, no less important. Slaves bred in the islands are much more attached to the spot. They have been gradually accustomed to the labour, and must consequently feel less objection to the performance of it. Trained up likewise in regular subordination, they must of course be much more manageable than those who are first put under the care of an overseer at a more advanced period of their life.

Slaves, on the other hand, who have been imported, are frequently persons who have been convicted of crimes, and may consequently be such as no person would be desirous of

employing, if he could possibly avoid it. Let it be added to all these circumstances, that children are of the greatest service in many parts of the labour, so that whilst the planter must be convinced, that they will be the most valuable slaves, when arrived at the age of maturity, he receives very considerable advantage from them, even in their earliest years.

It having then been proved, he said, that the interest of the planter was to breed, rather than to import, it must follow, that the planters would be little less than mad, to purchase slaves, if they were not convinced that a farther supply was necessary.

But it had been said, that the births and the deaths in the islands were equal, and that consequently no farther supply was wanted.

He was ready to admit, that the births and deaths were nearly equal, but the question must still come to this: was the stock of slaves in the islands sufficient? Suppose that in the island of Jamaica there were 250,000 slaves, and suppose, what he rather doubted, that number sufficient for the cultivation of the island; he yet ventured to assert, if the farther importation was to be stopped, that the number of slaves in the island was not sufficient; for gentlemen seemed to have forgot, that persons in that climate are subject to diseases, of which we are ignorant, and which sweep away hundreds, nay sometimes thousands at a time. They seem to have forgot, that they are subject to hurricanes and famines, which have the same dreadful effects.

Whatever number of slaves there was necessary for the cultivation of the islands, if farther importation was to be stopped, an extra number would be necessary, in order that, in case of any extraordinary mortality, from the circumstances already stated, the complete ruin of the planter might be prevented.

That the time would come, when the stock of slaves in the island would be sufficient, no person, he observed, who had attended to the former part of his argument could doubt. That the slaves had gradually increased, were gradually in-

creasing, and that by certain regulations the increase might be considerably promoted, must be equally obvious. But these were all considerations which should induce us to oppose the abolition, because the event, without any of the evils that might arise from the immediate adoption of that measure, must, in the natural order which he had described, take place in the course of a very short period.

He then wished the Committee to consider, what mischiefs might arise from the planters being able to smuggle. How dangerous it might be, that they should depend on other nations, and not on us, for their supply of slaves—That from entering into bargains and contracts, perhaps even with our enemies, their dispositions might be alienated from us, that the loss of the islands themselves might be the consequence; and not only the loss of so much revenue, and so much power to ourselves, but the acquisition of that power, and that revenue by our enemies—And why, said he, should we expose ourselves to such a risk? For any benefit which would result to the negroes? On the contrary, it had been proved that it would be a disadvantage to them.

Let it likewise be considered, that we may deprive ourselves by these means of the power of enforcing regulations, and that thus the trade might go on as it does at present, with a much less rapid increase of the slaves by birth.—This was however, he continued to observe, not the only risk to which we were exposing our colonies. Let us reflect on the calamities of St. Domingo, which have been imputed by the deputies from that island, to the advocates of abolition. What horror could be described, what ravage could be painted, what cruelty could be committed, which those unfortunate beings had not suffered? And should we, when principles of the same sort are lurking in our own islands, should we expose our fellow-subjects to the same calamities, who, if guilty of promoting this trade, have at least been encouraged by ourselves, by us, who, though parties in the guilt, would in no adequate degree be parties in the suffering?

It had been said, that there was a distinction between the abolition of the slave trade, and the emancipation of the slaves. He admitted that distinction; but should they be surprised if the slaves, who, receiving no immediate benefit from the abolition of the trade, should complain that these principles were not equally applied to themselves; should they be surprised if their minds, not cultivated as our own, should not feel so nice a distinction, or at least, if they did feel it, would be too much interested to appear to do so.

That the slave trade was in itself an evil, he was ready to admit. That the state of slavery itself was likewise an evil he was no less ready to admit. That if the question was, not to abolish, but establish them, he, of all those who professed so much zeal for the interests of humanity, would not be the least eager to oppose it; but, he demanded, were there not many evils in this world which we should have thought it our duty to prevent, yet which, when once they had taken place, it was more dangerous to oppose than to submit to? The duty of a Statesman was, not to consider abstractly what was right or wrong, but to weigh the disadvantages that were likely to arise from the abolition of an evil, against the consequences that were likely to arise from the continuance of it.

On this ground let us judge of the present question.

Here is an evil which, it has been proved, can be but of short continuance; the continuance of which, by proper regulations, may be extremely shortened. The extirpation of which, instead of being productive of good, would be productive of essential harm to those whom it is meant to benefit; and shall we, appearing to prevent the short continuance of this evil, adopt a measure which can be of no advantage on one hand, and which threatens every calamity on the other, which threatens a diminution of our revenue, and consequently a serious misfortune to the people of this country, which threatens the ruin of the property of those persons who, under our encouragement, have settled in the West India islands, which threatens murder, and all those

cruelties which, by the adoption of the measure, we are desirous of preventing.

He had frequently rejoiced at the idea, that some of those evils which had existed in all ages, and under all governments, were likely, in the present period, to be abolished; that we lived in an age where knowledge had become more universal than in any former period, and that, under the mild influence of true religion and philosophy, society was likely to receive considerable improvements. But he had always dreaded that those improvements should be too rapid; convinced that by this means their very end may be prevented.

Violent changes, he observed, shake the frame instead of supporting it. They endanger its existence; and if the constitution outlives the shock, it is restored weak and enfeebled. Gradual changes strengthen and uphold it. The consequence of the change, and not the change, is felt. Every step secures the preceding, and becomes the foundation for additional improvement.

Agreeing, then, most perfectly with the friends to the abolition in their end, he differed with them only in the means of accomplishing that end. He was desirous of doing that gradually, which they were desirous of doing rashly.

Mr. Jenkinson then alluded to what had fallen from Mr. Dundas. To some part of his propositions he agreed, but he equally differed with him in others.

He had drawn up two propositions, which met his ideas on the subject, and which, if the Committee would give him leave, he would state to them.

He then read his two propositions, viz.

“ That an address be presented to His Majesty, that he
“ would be pleased to recommend to the Colonial Assem-
“ lies, to grant premiums to such planters and overseers as
“ should distinguish themselves by promoting the annual
“ increase of the slaves by birth. And likewise to grant
“ freedom to every female negro who had borne and reared
“ up five children to the age of seven years.

“ 2d. That a bounty of 5l. per head be given to the
“ master of every vessel employed in the trade from the coast
“ of Africa, who should import, in any cargo, a greater
“ number of female than male negroes, not exceeding the
“ age of twenty-five years.”

Mr. Jenkinson, in order, he said, that he might be enabled to bring forward his propositions in form, moved
“ That the Chairman should leave the Chair.”

Mr. ESTWICKE, in a few words, gave his opinion in favour of the amendment moved by Mr. Dundas.

Mr. Chancellor PITT began by declaring, that, although he cordially concurred with the right honourable gentleman opposite to him, in almost every point that he had stated, he differed with him in one particular, and that was in regard to the impression made on his mind by the arguments of his right honourable friend near him, and by those stated by another right honourable friend, (the Speaker.) Instead of conveying to him any other sentiments than those of satisfaction, they were in the highest degree satisfactory ; because they convinced him that the subject was at last brought to a very near approach to a final and fortunate conclusion. Though he differed from them, he was pleased to see that neither they nor Mr. Jenkinson actually approved of the trade, but differed only as to the mode and time of abolishing it. No man would hereafter pretend to argue, that the abolition of the slave trade ought not to take place, however, from motives of an interested or private nature, he might wish to defer the day of its abolition. That important and real calamity, that curse of the nation, was now so well understood, and the disgrace of it so perfectly felt, that he might safely consider that its sentence was sealed, and its doom determined. The sense of the people was so clear, that no doubt could be entertained on the subject ; and they had the comfort of knowing, that the horrible traffic of selling man to man must be annihilated.

He then proceeded to argue the whole of the question in the view in which he had ever considered the subject. A great part of his speech he dedicated to proving, from figures, that the population of the negroes in our West-India islands was increasing ; that nothing had been found, from experience, to

operate so effectually to check that increase, as the importation of more African slaves; that the increase was already arrived at that proportion, which promised an immediate sufficiency, adequate to all the necessary purposes of cultivation and agriculture. After very amply stating this, he went into a detail of the catalogue of calamities entailed on the wretched Africans on their very coasts: he shewed that the inevitable consequences of the slave trade were internal wars, rapine, and murder; that the trade precluded the possibility of civilization, and rendered the very idea of illuminating the minds of the miserable Africans, and giving them notions of morality, religion, and virtue, utterly impracticable. He made a quotation from Rapiu, to prove that the practice of selling our fellow-creatures for slaves had once prevailed in this island, and that in the time of Pope Gregory, a number of fine British youths were seen upon sale for slaves in the public market place at Rome. He commented on this fact with infinite force and ingenuity, and applied it as a most powerful appeal to the heart of every Briton, whether after so striking a proof of the happy change that had taken place in this country, which had made us the seat of arts, the center of commerce, the happiest and the freest nation on the habitable globe, enjoying liberty, governed and secured by law, and living under a constitution the envy of surrounding nations, and the constant object of their imitation, we had a right to say that Africa might not emerge from the state of barbarism and ignorance in which she was at present involved, if we were to put an end to a practice, which not only disgraced ourselves to a degree beyond all powers of description, but put it out of the power of the Africans to become an enlightened people, as long as that practice was continued. If the same conduct had been followed towards our ancestors, that we had so long, and so improperly adopted towards Africa, which would have totally prevented us from being in the situation of singular prosperity and happiness, in every respect, that we now enjoyed, and which made our country the admiration of all the world.

If the trade was to be abolished at all, there was no reason why the abolition should not take place immediately. The injuries we had done were great; and our atonement should be the more speedy. An argument against it was, that, if we abandon the trade, it would be taken up by others. But of this

we should be very sure, before we adopted any proceedings in it. We were unquestionably the greatest aggressors, and should not be the last to shew our repentance of the injury. It was certainly our duty to make the experiment. There was nothing in the soil, the climate, or the manner of the Africans, save only the manners for which they were indebted, treachery and artifice, which distinguished them particularly from other remote nations to which our navigators had made their way; yet such were the propensities which we taught and promoted in them, that the oldest of our discoveries remained the most barbarous, by which we were shut out from all intercourse with the interior parts of fair and fruitful colonies, whose trade may enrich us, while we continued a base and bloody intercourse with the natives of the coast. Instead of this wretched and dishonourable system, let us give these negroes the means of gradually ascending into civilization, of embracing a mild and benevolent religion, of cultivating the useful and ornamental arts; and perhaps we ourselves may live to see the evening of their day gilded with the brightest prospects, from the hopes of which they had been removed through many revolving centuries.

He concluded by stating, that for the various reasons he had given, the solid and substantial arguments that had been used both on this and former occasions, in favour of the abolition, he should find himself obliged to vote against the motion for adjournment, against the motion of amendment, and lastly, if divisions were persisted in, for the original motion, as made by his honourable friend who opened the business.

At length, the House divided on Mr. Jenkinson's question;

Ayes, for the adjournment	-	87
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Noes	-	-	-	-	-	234
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Majority against the adjournment 147

The House next divided on the question that the word "gradually" stand part of the question;

Ayes	-	-	193
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Noes	-	-	125
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Majority - 68

The House divided a third time on the question that the amended question be agreed to ;

Ayes	-	-	230
Noes	-	-	85

Majority - 145

The question, " That the abolition of the slave trade ought to be gradually abolished," was therefore carried.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 3d April.

Mr. MAINWARING presented a petition on the behalf of the Grand Jury for the county of Middlesex, stating their apprehension of the mischiefs that may arise to the lower classes of people from insurance in the lottery, and praying the House to take the subject into consideration, and take such measures as the case might seem to require.

Ordered to lie on the table.

The bill to dissolve the marriage of Mr. Wilmot from his present lady, being proposed for a first reading.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, he wished to obtain the attention of the House for a moment. Several bills had lately passed for divorces without any sort of provision for the ladies, by which means they were brought to distress ; and the object of all good men, that they might become virtuous, was defeated ; for, from the wretchedness of their circumstances, they were compelled to follow an abandoned course of life. He understood that some Lords objected to any sort of provision for ladies, thus unfortunately situated—some regulation should be made in this respect. He was determined to oppose in future every Divorce bill, if it contained no provision for the lady. He thought that to neglect them in that manner was very disgraceful, and therefore he thought it his duty to submit something on this subject to the House. The bill was then read.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 4th April.

The order of the day being read for committing the lottery bill to a Committee of the whole House,

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved, " That the Speaker do now
" leave the Chair.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, he should take the sense of the House upon the present subject; but before he did, he thought it his duty to state his reasons for it, reasons that convinced his mind of the ill tendency of this measure. He did so because he thought the mischiefs which arose out of it were so glaring and evident, that they needed no other illustration than barely to state them; and if the House would allow him, he would adduce facts which would cause them to pause awhile before they assented to this measure. The chief object which he had in view was that of a Committee to inquire into all the abuses which were occasioned by a lottery. If this was granted, the proceeding would be regular and proper, in order that the House might be able to bring the subject to a condition that would enable them to submit it to the view of the public. But he thought it would be admitted to him that much mischief did arise from the lottery. If there was a doubt of it, and he wanted any authority in support of his assertion, he should call on the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, and he believed he would admit the existence of great parts of the evil himself; he had frequently done so on former occasions, and certain modes of regulation had been adopted to prevent it; but he appealed to the House whether the evil did not still exist in its utmost force, and if doubt was entertained of this, he thought he had evidence in his pocket that would be decisive on that part of the case. He heard stated, yesterday, the presentment of the Grand Juries of London and Middlesex, relative to this business; and he was sure, that if the House would only have the goodness to attend to the presentment of this evil, they would be satisfied it now existed in its fullest force. He should read two paragraphs, which would be a proof of it (here he read two paragraphs out of the presentment to which he had alluded, and which fully supported his assertion). He was sure the House would be content with this ample proof of this mischief, and would be convinced it was very well worth their attention. A petition had been presented, containing what he had just read, and which the House had received and ordered to be laid on the table. He wished the House to recollect, that there was a great degree of authority in the presentment of a Grand Jury;

they were not simple individuals, who stated a vague opinion without evidence; they were a set of men, whose business it was to perform duties of the most important nature. Their office was of the utmost consequence, instituted for the wisest ends, for the benefit of society. They had thought proper to make this remonstrance to the House, and he should think this would have its due weight. He could not there call the lottery a nuisance, because the House had authorized it, but the Grand Jury had called it so in a Court of Justice. He was not finding fault with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's regulating bill, because he thought it was impossible to make an act of Parliament for the regulation of the lottery, that would not be evaded. But, in defence of lotteries in general, it had been said, that if there were no lottery by law, such was the temper of the people, that they would have a lottery of their own; and therefore it was right for Parliament to turn this incurable temper for gaming to the service of the State. If the premises were true, he doubted very much whether he should agree to the conclusion. But the premises were not true. It was the lottery that was the means by which a lure was held out to the Public to enter into a spirit of gambling. It might be said, perhaps, that it would be in vain to abolish lotteries at home, unless we could abolish lotteries in Ireland also, for people would gamble there more than they have hitherto done, in proportion as they were deprived of the means of doing so in England. To this he answered, that if the mischief was removed here, with the concurrence of Ministers, there existed between this country and Ireland such a connection, that it would not be matter of difficulty to introduce there, by the Officers of Government, the same system of regulation. But the last argument was the facility with which money was raised for the service of the revenue by a lottery, and that it laid no particular involuntary hardships upon any individual. He granted these advantages were considerable, but they had more or less weight according to the circumstances with which they were attended. In the course of a long and expensive war, when our expenditure exceeded our income to a vast amount, the argument in favour of raising money by a lottery might have some weight and force, but he appealed to the House whether we were in that situation at present or not? The Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer himself had stated, and he dared say, truly, the increase and extent of our commerce, and the flourishing state of our finances. So much so, that he had a surplus, part of which he had appropriated as an addition to the fund for the reduction of the national debt, and the other for the reduction of taxes. That was, 150,000*l.* for the reduction of taxes, and the remainder towards the reduction of the debt. He wished the Chancellor of the Exchequer had retained the taxes, and abandoned the lottery. He was sure he would, by such means, obtain the approbation of every sober and discreet man in this country, and would finally receive the general estimation of the Public, after they had coolly and maturely deliberated on the subject. He would have reason to expect, and would in time receive their thanks for such conduct. He begged the House to recollect, that notwithstanding all the efforts of Ministers, the evils of the lottery were not stopped; and he must confess, that persisting in this measure, under all circumstances, surprised him: two or three years ago he understood that a lottery was intended only as a fund to settle the claims of the American Loyalists, but now it was brought forward as a permanent source of revenue; this had alarmed him exceedingly, and so it had many other gentlemen in that House whom he had consulted.

The institution of a lottery had introduced amongst the lower ranks of people a spirit for gambling, that he did not know how we could get rid of. There were houses in several streets which he knew, in Westminster particularly, and adjoining Pall Mall, and part of the Strand, where the games of faro and hazard were adapted to all ranks and descriptions of individuals; where persons in a few days or a few weeks might be completely ruined. This was all owing originally to the lottery; for it was that which first infused into the minds of the people such a disposition for gaming; it was true that these evils might be removed by the proper exertion of Magistrates, but they could not be totally suppressed while the lottery remained, for that always kept alive a disposition to gambling, a disposition which Parliament sanctioned, and contributed to promote, while it maintained a lottery. They thus afforded an encouragement to vice, but ill suited to their characters as

Legislators and guardians of the public morals. For these reasons, he thought it his duty to oppose the motion.

Mr. ROSE said, he believed the honourable gentleman was mistaken ; that the evils he complained of had existed, he believed to be true, but he had reason to think they existed no longer. They had not arisen from lotteries themselves, but from the illegal insurance offices that had been opened. Those offices were now put an end to, and he hoped effectually. Two or three years after passing the 27th of the present King, doubts were entertained as to the construction of that act, and the Commissioners of the Stamp Office did not know precisely how to act ; but on a late occasion, they had taken up persons concerned in illegal insurances, and they were committed to custody by the Lord Mayor. Those persons had in consequence applied to the Court of King's Bench for their *habeas corpus*, when the matter had then been solemnly argued in Court, and it was the opinion of the Judges that the Lord Mayor had acted properly, and that his construction of the act of the 27th was the right construction. This had produced a most salutary effect, and from that time he did not think there was one illegal office open. He would not, he said, answer for the legal offices, whether they had been guilty of illegal insurances or not ; but all he meant to say was, that, as far as he knew, there was not an illegal insurance office remaining. There had, he said, been a number of persons officiating in such offices taken up, and every one of them carried before the Lord Mayor, who committed them as rogues and vagabonds, agreeable to the language of the law ; and they were now suffering confinement. He spoke of the exertions of the Commissioners of the Stamp Office to prevent illegal insurances, and said he believed they had an authority, when any man of whom they had an unfavourable opinion, applied for a licence to open a lottery office, to refuse him such licence ; if they had not such an authority already, a small alteration in the bill would give it to them.— But if there were no lotteries here, Mr. Rose reminded gentlemen that there were lotteries in Ireland, and if the House chose to forego the advantages of a lottery, the Irish Parliament might not be complaisant enough to do the same. But if they should, the honourable gentleman well knew that there were lotteries in Holland and France, and if such a spirit of gamb-

ling prevailed, offices of insurance on those lottery schemes might be opened. All that had been said of E. O. Tables had nothing to do with the lottery.

Mr. DRAKE said, whenever an honourable Member stood forward to amend the morals of the people, he never should want his aid and support, being an independant man, connected with no party whatever. He declared he was sorry to say that public gambling was the vice and disgrace of the times. A lottery, he had ever considered to be a war evil, and not naturally connected with a peace establishment. He added, that as the motion was nothing more than for a Committee to inquire into the evils resulting from lotteries, he would certainly vote for it.

The SPEAKER informed Mr. Drake that the motion then before the House, was merely that he should leave the Chair.

Mr. TAYLOR said, in explanation, that if his opposing the Speaker's leaving the chair should meet the sense of the House, he meant then to move for a Committee of Inquiry.

Mr. DRAKE resumed his speech and said, he had understood the matter differently, but under the auspices of the Chancellor of the Exchequer he was persuaded that no evils that could be prevented would be suffered to exist. Regulations he thought might obtain to the prevention of insurance. He reprobated the idea of Great Britain in her strength resorting to a lottery because Ireland did, and as to foreign nations, he asked if they were to be ruled by them? The evil he thought lay in the country's legislating lotteries, and therefore he would recommend and exhort the measure of an Inquiry to both sides of the House. Mr. Drake said, he ever did and would support the Minister of that House, but that his conscience should not be violated. He would act as an honest man. He complimented the Minister for his virtues, his sagacity, his prudence and his integrity, and concluded with declaring that he would support him as long as he lived.

Mr. HAWKINS BROWNE said, he would not object to the present bill, because undoubtedly it was in some measure an agreed part of the finance of the year; but he hoped there would be no more lotteries, because they certainly did encourage gambling under the sanction of the Legislature. He professed himself indebted to his honourable friend on the floor

(Mr. Rose) for taking all the pains he could, to prevent abuses, and was glad he had prevented so many illegal offices; but he certainly had not put a stop to all illegal insurances, nor was that, he believed, easily to be accomplished. The honourable gentleman had said, that if they did not adopt this scheme, there would be a lottery in Ireland, in France, and in Holland; but that surely was no reason why we were to have a lottery.

Mr. COURTENAY said, he owned he could not agree with the honourable gentleman who had considered the spirit of gambling as a public evil. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was right in adopting a principle which had for many years been known, namely, that "private vices are public benefits."—This was a very plain principle, and the more vice was encouraged, the greater would be the benefit derived to the State: now, for the encouragement of this wise principle, nothing was better adapted than the lottery, and therefore Parliament in its true wisdom ought to cherish and protect it; and convinced of the truth of this principle, the Ministers had, with the profound penetration and sagacity that so peculiarly belonged to them, regularly brought on the lottery, and now made it one of the standing resources of revenue to support a peace establishment. It was a new manufacture for the welfare of the State. It was, however, a little remarkable, that the honourable gentleman who spoke lately, always bestowed the highest panegyric on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he was determined to vote against him; like Falstaff, when he reproved the Prince for his conduct, said, "He has put powder in my drink to make me love him."—As to the other honourable gentleman (Mr. Rose), he did not wonder at his defending the lottery; it was perfectly natural for a man, who knew so much of its beneficial effects, and had taken such pains to preserve its purity, that it should not be used for any purpose but for the increase of the revenue, should defend its principle. If it is no longer here, they will be in France and in Holland, said the honourable gentleman—a convincing argument certainly that it should be in England. Another reason he urged for them was, that there were no illegal offices.—Upon this he could give very good information from very good authority, if he (Mr. Rose) would be upon honour not to take

any advantage of it. He had evidence from undoubted authority. If the honourable gentleman had taken the pains to go for information on this subject to proper places, he would never have had any difficulty about knowing whether there were illegal offices, or whether any evils existed; but as he had not, of course he knew much better than those who had, and he was very right in taking advantage of the silliness of the people. He remembered that when Mr. Charles Townshend was Minister, and had proposed a lottery, some country gentlemen, who, by the bye, felt none of the evils of the measure, suggested to him the propriety of having one hundred thousand tickets instead of fifty thousand. He answered—"I have calculated the number of real fools in this country, and I find the number is exactly fifty thousand." He continued his ironical defence of the lottery on the authority of history. He said, that in Henry's History of England, it would appear that crimes, which were severely punished in certain cases, were rewarded when they produced what was called the good of the state. Thus, for instance, if a man indulged in pleasures of love, he was severely punished; but if he went to a licensed brothel, and there revelled in the sports of Venus with the most unblashed publicity, he was rewarded by the authority of the Bishop of Winchester, because his going thither contributed to the augmentation of the revenue of the Church! There were houses now in Holland of the same nature; he did not know whether the honourable gentleman had been in any of them, but he (Mr. Courtenay) had, and could speak of them, where two or three stivers were paid for this dalliance. Thus it appeared by civil and ecclesiastical authority, that private vices had been, and now are, considered as public benefits. As to the honourable gentleman's apprehension that the lottery might be carried on in Ireland if it was abandoned here, it was totally without foundation. Could it be proved to be an evil there, it would not for a moment be thought of as a measure of Government. There was a spirit of inquiry gone forth in the Legislature of that country which protected virtue and exposed vice in all its deformity. There was a rumour of a sale of Peerages there for the sake of keeping up a principle of legislative corruption. An open, candid, liberal inquiry was immediately agreed to on the part of Government, and on the fullest investigation,

the whole appeared to be without foundation, and the purity of Government established upon the clearest evidence—the majority of Members. Also the House were so remarkable for patriotism, and all the public virtues, that there was not a placeman, a pensioner, or a time-serving sycophant among them; they were the real organs of the genuine voice of the people of Ireland. What therefore could be expected from them, but attention to the welfare of the people. The last point was, the certainty of our always having customers for the lottery, and here he begged leave to conclude his speech, by a quotation from the works of Fielding:

“ A lottery is a taxation,
 “ Upon all the fools in creation;
 “ And Heav’n be prais’d,
 “ It is easily rais’d,
 “ Credulity’s always in fashion:
 “ For folly’s a fund,
 “ Will never lose ground,
 “ While fools are so rife in the nation.”

Mr. FRANCIS, after glancing at the debate on the slave trade, and observing that fame which had been acquired on a former occasion was lost upon that, and fell perhaps never to rise again, said, that with regard to what had been said of illegal offices, it was to be observed that those who had legal offices pursued in them many illegal practices; that those who went into the front room of those offices for the transaction of legal business, might be introduced into the back room for the carrying on of illegal business. He answered the observation of Mr. Rose, with regard to a lottery in Ireland, that it was not the business of any Member in the House, but the officer of Government there, connected with and speaking the language of the Minister of this country, and the principle that abolished it here would do so there. There was no good authority for a lottery in any but a time of emergency. Mr. Pelham, he was told, had always thought and said so. It was said that a lottery was voluntary. This he denied; for while we threw temptation in the way of the Public, they would always be unable to resist it; and therefore, as to its effect, it

was no better than compelling them to pay a tax. He had made strict inquiry into facts which arose out of the nature of the lottery, and he was clearly, from the best evidence, convinced that it was of the most destructive tendency to the morals, and consequently to the happiness, of all classes of persons who had any concern in it. The unhappy persons who were sent to Botany Bay, those whom the law doomed to death, all descriptions of persons who had their fate determined at the Old Bailey, would, if they related the truth, say, that if the lottery was not the only, it was always a great cause of their calamity. There was hardly any thing infamous, that was not in some degree connected with the lottery, nor any thing unfortunate. If we went to the King's Bench Prison, to the Fleet, all the prisons in and about the metropolis, all the prisoners would inform us of their losses in the lottery. Gambling, if thus publicly encouraged, would drive the lower orders of the people to a degree of fury and madness. Nor were people of rank entirely free from the evil. Gambling was a vice, they all knew, which men of the most enlightened minds, men possessed of reason, and capable of reflection, could not resist; and how could they expect the ignorant and uninformed to withstand it, when its captivating allurements were held out to them? What, he would ask, caused the revolution abroad?—All manner of profligacy, but chiefly gaming, which was established by Government, and countenanced by the Court. Why was it so countenanced? For obvious reasons; to engage men's minds, and abstract them from deeply regarding the conduct of an arbitrary Government. In such a Government it was policy; but was the case the same here? Exactly the reverse.—The Court by its practice shewed no favour to gaming, but at the same time the Legislature encouraged it. In short, it was an evil that ought to be resisted with all the authority with which Parliament was invested. He recommended to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to the House, to take this subject most seriously into their consideration; he declared that what he had said came directly from his judgement and his feelings, and he could add nothing more on the subject.

Mr. W. SMITH was decidedly against the lottery. He said, that within half a mile of his house there was some time since a lottery-office opened. Its effect was soon felt in the

neighbourhood. By the exertion of the Magistrates it was removed ; but afterwards it was opened again ; the effect almost immediately was, that all the lower classes of the people in the neighbourhood were ruined ; not a livery servant was left with a shilling. He felt, that from a sense of his duty he must oppose this bill.

Mr. MAINWARING was of opinion it was not to the lottery itself, but to the manner in which it was conducted, that the evil was attributable. He thought that something should be done to alter the manner of drawing the lottery. He had before him between thirty and forty miserable people, clerks in lottery offices : miserable rogues and vagabonds, as the law called them. Their situation was most wretched ; and their wives and children wretched, under the perpetual apprehension of the imprisonment of their protector, which often was the case. If we gave 50,000*l.* to put an end to the nuisance, he should not think the money lost to the Public ; but he was apprehensive that some mode might be devised for that purpose. If he was sure that the lottery should go on as before, without some material amendment, he should consider himself bound to oppose it.

Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE thought nothing could be better than a Committee of Inquiry in this case. We should then see something of the abuse of the lottery. He thought that some remedy might be found to the evil. It was a tax upon folly ; it would always be productive ; the class who were its objects were numerous ! Lottery first came from Holland. He saw no reason why it should not all be drawn in one day.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that whatever difference of opinion might be entertained of the permanency of a lottery, considered as an object of revenue, he should hope there could not be any difference of opinion with regard to the propriety of the Speaker leaving the chair ; because if any opposition had really been intended to this bill, it should have been taken at an earlier opportunity. Parliament had in some degree sanctioned it. They had passed both the bills for repealing taxes, and for the appropriating the remainder of the surplus of the year towards the reduction of the national debt, and it must be remembered, that as in the ways and means of the year 300,000*l.* had been calculated upon the lottery, taxes to that amount must

now be raised upon the Public, or the lottery must be allowed. He hoped the House would feel the necessity of adopting the lottery for the present year. At least, at present he did not see any reason why it should be relinquished as a permanent measure. He should not propose it, if he thought it tended to pervert the morals or destroy the industry of any class of individuals; but of this he had heard no evidence. As to illegal schemes, he observed, that so far was the lottery from depending upon them, that he wished them entirely to be abolished; he should have that wish if he had nothing in view but the prosperity of the lottery, for he was clearly of opinion that illegal schemes operated to the injury of the sale of tickets. As to the other point, the drawing of the lottery in a much shorter time, to prevent insurance and illegal practices, he could not think that a scheme of that nature would do; that, and many other schemes, had been proposed to him, but none that he had hitherto seen appeared to him to be such as ought to be adopted. If any scheme should be proposed to him that would separate the evil from the good, so as not materially to diminish the advantage arising to the revenue from the lottery, he would be very glad to receive and adopt it; but he submitted, in point of fairness, that whatever should be done in that respect ought to be prospective, and that nothing should be done to diminish the value of tickets for this lottery: but if it was so, that would not be a reason for his opinion on the mischief of making this a permanent measure, and gentlemen would see whether this could be adopted or not, before they gave up this great part of our revenue; nor did he see at present how any thing could be applied in this particular lottery, because persons had now bought the whole of it at a very high price, and it would be very unfair dealing to do any thing that would lessen the value of tickets after this purchase, and therefore he should be glad to refer all consideration on this subject to future lotteries, for the purpose of finding out a good plan to separate the mischief from the benefit, but he was far from being confident that any such could be made.

Mr. POWNEY, in answer to Mr. Courtenay's remark, that the country gentlemen were ready to vote any tax that did not affect themselves, reminded that gentleman of the land tax of four shillings in the pound.

Mr. COURTENAY said a word or two in explanation.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, he had omitted no one opportunity since he had enjoyed the honour of a seat in that House, of opposing lotteries; however, the subject had been so fully discussed, and so ably argued, that he should not have spoken upon it at all, but from what had fallen from the right honourable gentleman. He had expected, Mr. Sheridan said, that the right honourable gentleman would have sat silent and abashed, conscious that he could not advance a single argument in favour of a practice so destructive and mischievous, as raising revenue by lotteries. The right honourable gentleman, from what he had said, seemed to think the wisest way to get rid of this evil was by degrees. On the contrary, Mr. Sheridan said, he was for an immediate, not a gradual, abolition of lotteries. The right honourable gentleman had said, the drawing could not be shorter than usual, because the bargain was struck; he agreed with the right honourable gentleman that they must keep to their bargain, but was not what the right honourable gentleman had said, an argument against having any lottery at all? The honourable gentleman (Mr. Rose) Mr. Sheridan observed, had said, if we had no lottery, Ireland would have one; did not every body know that a lottery in Ireland was not a measure moved by an indifferent Member of the Irish House of Commons, jumping up and proposing a lottery, but was a measure of the Government, and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland did not move a lottery as a part of the finance of the year, the Government of Ireland would institute no lottery there? The whole, it was well known, depended on the Government here. The Minister said that all the measures of the ways and means were already brought forward; that was very true; but the House were not bound to give him discretionary power over measures that appeared unwise; for his part, it should be remembered, that he at the opening of the business had objected to this very measure. If the Minister must have a discretionary power over 300,000l., Mr. Sheridan declared it to be his opinion, that the better way would be for the House to vote him that sum of money to be raised on Exchequer bills; and in the mean time the lottery bill to be suspended, until an inquiry should be had into all the abuses which had been already so well described. Here Mr. Sheridan recounted many of the

evils of the lottery, as they came to his knowledge, when on a Committee upon that subject. At first they pawned ornaments and superfluities—then furniture, that could the most easily be spared—at last, came their beds, implements and tools of trade—the very clasp of their children's shoes, and the very cloaths of the cradle. He believed there was not any thing in this metropolis, that gave such pangs of affliction to the human heart, as the lottery. In short, the pawnbroker had declared, he was at last ashamed of his profession, from the wretchedness it enabled him to witness. Mr. Sheridan, on the whole of these considerations, advised the giving up of the lottery altogether, and said, the profits might be supplied by the Chancellor of the Exchequer issuing Exchequer bills to the amount of 300,000*l.* he hoped therefore the bill would at least be suspended for the present.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that if the 300,000*l.* should be granted instead of the lottery, it would be neither more nor less than either borrowing that sum on these bills, and raising it afterwards by new taxes on the people, or that it should be deducted out of the sum already appropriated for the reduction of the national debt. This resolution, on which this bill was founded, was made by the House of Commons on their own authority. The tickets of the present lottery had been sold; the purchasers had made their deposit. The property they purchased was transferrable, and may have been transferred, and therefore what was proposed by the honourable gentleman was impracticable.

Mr. WINDHAM was decidedly against all lotteries upon all occasions, except the most pressing State necessity. They were always bad measures of finance in all points of view in which they could be taken. The gain upon them was not clear gain, for they impoverished the persons who had dealings in them, and in proportion as he contributed to the revenue in this way, he was incapacitated from contributing in other ways; and although it was true, that, as a voluntary thing, parties dealing in it could not complain, yet the poverty which this occasioned, introduced discontent in other points of revenue, and therefore the idea that this was one of those taxes which did not create discontent in the people against the imposts of Government, was futile.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said a few words; he retained his former opinion, but admitted the necessity of an inquiry in this case, and if it appeared that the advantage to the Public could not be separated from the evil, and the evil was, what at present he did not believe, such as had this evening been stated, the lottery in future should be abandoned, but that depended on these two *ifs*.

Mr. FOX said, there were two points to be considered in this case: the first related to the difficulty of entering into the question now, and the other as to the expediency of having a lottery. With respect to the first, he declared freely that he had not the shadow of a difficulty on it, and that he would not stop for a moment upon it. It was upon the second the difficulty had arisen. He had reason to complain of the general system which was adopted by the Minister upon the business of finance. He proposed that the surplus which he boasted of in part be applied to the reduction of taxes, and partly to the reduction of the national debt. It was ungracious to oppose this, and Parliament agree. Then when the ways and means came to be brought forward, a lottery is brought forward as one of the measures of finance. The House disapproves of that measure; the answer is, "I have made the bargain with the pur-
"chasers of tickets—the public faith is pledged." By the bye, it was pretty bold to call a bargain made by the dealers of lottery tickets with an individual, a pledge of public faith, before the House had agreed that there should be a lottery. Then we were told, that unless this was agreed to, other taxes must be imposed. Why, so they must certainly, or the lottery must be agreed to. But the complaint was, that these things were done without the previous concurrence of the House. The House was called on only to ratify the bargain of the Minister; whereas if the House had been allowed to exercise its proper functions, it would have preferred the continuing of the taxes that were now repealed to the imposition of the lottery. This was not using the House well—it was taking away its deliberative capacity. As to lotteries themselves, he had sometimes, in cases of emergency, thought them a mode, not a very good one, but he had thought them a mode by which money ought to be raised for the service of the Public. But from conversation which he had lately had with some families, and the vari-

ous accounts he had heard of the evils of a lottery, he was induced in some degree to change his opinion. He concluded with assenting to the inquiry, and saying, that under the particular circumstances of the case, he should not think of taking the sense of the House, on the question of the Speaker leaving the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT shewed that the House had voted a lottery before he attempted to conclude the bargain.

Mr. LAMBTON asked, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer assented to the Committee of Inquiry?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he had stated most distinctly that he did.

Mr. PULTENEY said, he had ever considered lotteries as measures to be resorted to only in war and in exigencies of state. The right honourable gentleman he observed, had said, that the lottery relieved the people from taxes; but he would ask, was not the lottery a tax in which their payment was voluntary? It was the nature of all the taxes to be so; if people did not chuse to pay the taxes they did not consume the article taxed. A lottery was the worst sort of tax, as it injured the morals of the people. Mr. Pulteney said, he was glad to hear the right honourable gentleman was not against the proposed inquiry; one right honourable gentleman had altered his opinion, in respect to lotteries, and perhaps after the Committee had gone into the inquiry, the other right honourable gentleman might also change his opinion on the subject.

Mr. SAMUEL THORNTON said he disliked lotteries, and should in future give his opposition to them in every stage. With regard to the present lottery, it must, he believed, be gone on with, as to his knowledge, payments had been made at the Bank and receipts delivered.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, his object had been to get rid of lotteries as a permanent system of revenue; therefore he should not persist in his objection as to the present lottery.

Mr. FOX wished to be understood not to have altered in his mind more than he really had; he had altered his mind from hearing evils of which he had no thoughts until lately. Supposing those evils, what he feared was not the case, to be false, and that the lottery could be carried on without them, then his opinion would remain as it originally stood.

After a short conversation between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Sheridan, the motion for the Speaker leaving the Chair was put and carried, and the bill committed.

Mr. FOX said, he held in his hand a petition signed by more than a thousand of the electors of Westminster—not such persons as had been said on Monday to have signed the petitions against the slave trade, but persons who understood, and had an interest in preventing the abuses against which they petitioned, complaining of abuses at former elections for Westminster, lately stated in the House, as a fit subject of inquiry.

The petition, setting forth the suspension and the final remission of the moiety of an Excise fine to Smith, the publican, through the interference of Mr. Rose, the Secretary to the Treasury, by whom he had been employed on the business of that election; and the discharge of Hoskins, committed to stand trial for penalties incurred under the lottery acts, on bail notoriously insufficient, because the said Hoskins procured sixty votes for Lord Hood, the ministerial candidate, was brought up and read.

Mr. FOX said, he meant only now to move that it do lie on the table, with an intimation, that soon after the holidays, he should make a motion for an inquiry into the subject of the complaint, if some other gentleman did not.

Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. DUNDAS said, every gentleman must feel the inconvenience arising from the delay attending the present mode of deciding on contested elections; if no other gentleman had a remedy to propose by way of amendment to Mr. Grenville's bill, he should propose one himself.

Mr. FOX said, an honourable friend of his (Mr. Thomas Grenville) had turned his attention to this subject, but meaning to avail himself of the experience, which the elections remaining to be decided might afford, he would probably not bring forward any amendment of the bill till the next session. In the mean time, the right honourable gentleman might communicate, and compare his ideas with those of his honourable friend.

Mr. DUNDAS said, he should be very ready to communicate his plan to the honourable gentleman alluded to; but it

was his wish to propose it this session, in order to expedite the decision of the contested elections remaining to be tried.

Major SCOTT said, that in pursuance of the notice he had given, he meant to move, that the accounts, presented by Mr. Troward, should be printed ; but as a respectable authority in the House meant to oppose the motion, and did not wish that the debate should come on at so late an hour, he consented to postpone his motion until to-morrow. Indeed he would have bowed to so great an authority, and have given up his motion altogether, had he not been convinced that the accounts contained matter highly disgraceful to the justice, the dignity, and the honour of Parliament. The Major said that he knew very well the accounts on the table, to be perused by the Members, never would be thoroughly read, and he wished that they should be printed, because he desired that the subject matter of those accounts should undergo the public discussion, and if no other person would bring them forward, he certainly would do it himself ; but, for the present, he wished the accounts to be printed, and should make his motion to-morrow.

Mr. VAUGHAN said, circumstances had been mentioned on Monday by the honourable gentleman who moved the abolition, as having taken place since the bill for regulating the trade, which made a strong impression on his mind—that of a Captain furnishing an African Prince with powder and ball to make war, for the purpose of procuring slaves ; of six Captains agreeing to fire upon a town, to compel the inhabitants to sell them slaves cheap, &c. The gentlemen who desired the names of those persons to be mentioned, did so only for the purpose of inquiring into their conduct ; and he now wished to move, that His Majesty's law officers be directed to prosecute such persons, if there was any law on which they could be prosecuted, or if there was not, that a law might be made to punish such practices in future. If the trade was to be continued for a limited time, it was fit that the mischief should be done in the most decent way.—The gradual abolition, he hoped, would meet with no opposition ; but it would be prudent to say as little as possible on the abolition of slavery in the islands, because that was a sub-

ject which came within the right of internal legislation ; and from what had been said of it already, gentlemen the most capable of giving information, might be disposed to withhold that information. Some of them, whose writings had been so often referred to, were, perhaps, sorry for the information they had given, from the use that was made of it.

Mr. Vaughan having intimated that he had no motion to make, was informed from the Chair that his proceeding to speak was irregular.

The House resolved itself into a Committee, to which the duties and drawbacks on sugars were referred.

Mr. RYDER said, the substance of the resolutions he meant to move, which would be debated with more propriety after gentlemen had had time to consider them, was, that when sugar rose to a certain price, 3*l.* per cwt. to be taken three times a year on an average of prices for six weeks preceding, delivered in to the clerk of the Grocers Company, the drawbacks on sugar exported should cease for four months, and no licences be granted for carrying sugar from our colonies to foreign ports ; that foreign sugar should be allowed to be warehoused ; and that a depot for foreign sugar should be established in the West Indies.

The several resolutions were read, and agreed to *pro forma*.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, that in consequence of various applications to know when he meant to bring in a bill on the resolution of Monday, for the gradual abolition, he rose to declare, that he neither could nor would bring in any bill for the gradual abolition, or in other words, to sanction for a time that which it was his deep and firm conviction ought not to endure one moment longer. It was for his right honourable friend, (Mr. Dundas) who proposed, or some of those who supported, the gradual instead of the immediate abolition, to follow up a measure which he disclaimed.

Mr. DUNDAS begged that the honourable gentleman would pursue the abolition, his own object, in his own

way. He had no bill to bring forward, nor could he have any, as much the greater part of the plan which he thought the best for obtaining the ultimate abolition, must be carried into effect by the internal Legislatures of the different islands.

Mr. FOX said, the right honourable gentleman was the best judge of his own intentions; but so fully was he persuaded of the general wish of the House to take immediate measures for the abolition, in some shape or other, and so fully convinced that those who voted for the gradual abolition were in earnest, that he thought a bill to that effect would have been brought in before the House rose on Tuesday morning. Now, for the first time, he was given to understand that they meant not to pursue their own resolution, but leave it to those who had voted against it. But how could they proceed upon it? The House had amended the motion for immediate abolition, by inserting the word "gradual." How could the honourable gentleman who moved that resolution, or he who supported it, frame a bill on a resolution substituted for it, which they had supported with all their power; and of which, notwithstanding the decision of the House, they could not approve. They thought immediate abolition the only practicable remedy. How then could they pretend to act on other men's ideas, and to follow up a principle, the practicability of which they did not understand? They who proposed and supported a gradual abolition, knew, or thought they knew, the means of carrying it into effect, and it was their duty to do so. If they did not, they had deluded and misled the House. The resolution they had come to would be a disgrace to the House, and an insult to the country. Many who had voted for the gradual abolition, would doubtless have voted for the immediate abolition, had not the former been held out to them, as the safer and more practicable course. If the right honourable gentleman did not follow it up, some one of the majority who voted for it surely must. If no man would un-

dertake it, the business should not drop. Means must be taken to enable the honourable gentleman, who moved the immediate abolition, to pursue his own measure. It was supported by the general sense of the country, and by persons, from their situation, of the greatest authority in the House, who had added to their former fame, by their brilliant display of talents in Monday's debate, and with such support it must succeed at last.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, nothing had fallen from him to warrant the speech of the right honourable gentleman ; it had been as much his intention to carry the opinion he delivered on a former night into effect, as it could have been that of any gentleman who had an opinion for the total abolition, had such been resolved on by the House. It was his opinion, when he had proposed the amendment, and it was still his opinion, that the House and the colonial assemblies ought to act together for the abolition ; for he was confident that the trade could not be got rid of until we had the concurrence of those assemblies, for until that time all regulations with respect to Africa would fail those whose object was abolition. He again said, he was not prepared to bring in a bill ; nor did he think it was reasonable he should be expected, within twenty-four hours after the discussion of the question had been closed, to bring forward any digested system, which he must have done, had he brought in a bill. He concluded, by saying, it was his intention to bring forward a measure on the resolution, for the gradual abolition of the trade.

Mr. FOX said, he was now to understand that the right honourable gentleman, what he certainly had not said before, meant to proceed with his plan this session. If he meant to wait till the assemblies of the several islands were consulted, he did not see that any bill could be carried through Parliament this session ; and that alone was a sufficient objection. With respect to the gradual abolition, two things appeared to him to be all that could be done by Parliament—to impose a duty on the importation of slaves into the islands, and to fix a period to the duration of the trade. Was either of these to be done this session ? If a session was suffered to be lost—if a bill, to say that the trade should have an end some time or other was not

brought into Parliament, so as to pass into a law, before the prorogation, they might be justly charged with imposing on the honest feelings of the Public, and affecting a zeal for humanity in their speeches, which never touched their hearts.— But it should not be so; he would not suffer a day to be lost, and should therefore move, “That the House resolve itself into a Committee on the 18th. of April, to consider of measures for the abolition of the slave trade.”

Mr. WILBERFORCE seconded the motion. He acquitted Mr. Dundas of any unfair intention in the amendment he had moved; but the resolution for a gradual abolition involved those who contended for the immediate abolition in difficulties. No time, however, was to be lost; they owed it to their own characters, they owed it to their country, and to the cause they had espoused, to proceed. They might suspend their deliberations, but that would not in Africa suspend the work of death—

Deliberat Roma, perit Saguntum.

Mr. W. SMITH said, it was undoubtedly incumbent on those who voted for the gradual abolition to act upon it; but he felt no anxiety on that head, for he was convinced, that they should come as soon to the abolition of the trade, if the resolution passed, were to be negatived, as if the right honourable gentleman were to bring in a bill upon it.

Mr. ESTWICK considered the motion, after what had passed, to be wholly unnecessary.

Mr. FOX said, the right honourable gentleman's intimation was, that he meant to go hand in hand with the West-India Legislatures, a mode in which he certainly could make no substantial progress during the present session, and therefore, he must persist in his motion.

Mr. BUXTON said, he had voted on a former night for the gradual abolition, upon the conviction that measures would have been taken in the present session for such an abolition; had he not thought so, he should have voted for the immediate and total abolition. He thanked the right honourable gentleman for having made the motion now before the House, and sincerely hoped that if the gradual abolition was not brought forward and carried in the present session, that the total and immediate abolition might.

Sir JAMES SANDERSON said, I entered this House on Monday, after a very attentive and long consideration of the subject out of doors, with a determination to form my ultimate opinion on that important subject by the expected debate ; and in supporting the amendment of the right honourable gentleman, I felt a consolation to my own feelings, being able to resist, which I aver I did with great difficulty, the arguments of the honourable gentleman who moved the abolition, and of the right honourable gentleman who so powerfully and wonderfully supported him.

But, Sir, I did not intend that this salutary measure of a gradual abolition should not begin now ; but, on the contrary, I relied on a period being ascertained in the course of the present session, to terminate this abominable traffic ; upon the principle of which I entirely agree with the honourable mover, only differing with him in the application of that principle, for effecting its final operation gradually ; appeared to me the safest mode to the country, and the most just conduct to the parties engaged under the sanction of Parliament in this trade.

I repeat, therefore, that I was perfectly satisfied with my vote on that night, believing the right honourable gentleman to be pledged to its immediate adoption ; but if I find, on the contrary, there is any danger of its going over the present session, I declare fairly, that I had rather have voted for the original question, and shall certainly now support the present motion of the right honourable gentleman, if no satisfactory explanation is given.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS again rose ; he said, he thought he had been as explicit as possible in his declaration ; it was his intention in the present session to bring forward such measures as should appear to him best calculated to carry his opinion into effect ; a detail of those measures, he did not think any gentleman could at that time expect from him.

Mr. FOX said, he asked for no detail, he wished simply to know whether the right honourable Secretary of State intended to bring forward any bill for fixing the period of abolition in sufficient time to render it probable that it could be passed into a law in the present session.

To the question Mr. Dundas not rising, Mr. Fox said across the table, there is no explanation.

Mr. WILBERFORCE again spoke; he said, he saw the necessity of the right honourable gentleman's (Mr. Fox's) motion, entertaining no hopes that the colonial assemblies would agree to any bill for abolishing the trade.

Mr. Alderman WATSON said, the right honourable gentleman had explained himself to his satisfaction. He dreaded the immediate and indefinite abolition of the slave trade, but was zealous for the gradual abolition. He had never thought that it ought to be continued.

Sir JAMES ST. CLAIR ERSKINE deprecated two ideas being entertained on the subject—that the gradual abolition was to be prosecuted with all possible dispatch by those who proposed it, and that it was not. He had voted for the gradual abolition on the idea of its greater practicability, and on the persuasion that the House was not to separate, after coming to the resolution, without ordering a bill to be brought in to fix a time, beyond which the trade was not to be continued.

Mr. RYDER said, that as there was no objection to the motion itself, the discussion, now going on, would be more proper, when the day came for going into the Committee.

The question was put on Mr. Fox's motion, and carried.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 5th April.

The Black Rod having been sent to command the attendance of the House in the House of Lords, the Speaker made the following speech to His Majesty:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

It is my duty to tender to your Majesty two bills, in the name, and on the behalf of, the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled.

In pursuance of your Majesty's recommendation, your Commons cheerfully proceeded to make a provision for the establishment of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York; and they trust that the bill, which they have passed for this purpose, will fully manifest their just sense of what is due to the rank and dignity of their Royal Highnesses, as well as the satisfaction they derive from an event which, whilst it promotes the comfort

and happiness of your Majesty and your illustrious family, is also materially conducive to the interests and honour of your people.

Other objects, no less interesting to your Majesty's mind, constantly directed as it is to the welfare of your subjects, have also engaged the attention of your Commons. The prosperous and improving condition of the public revenue, and the reductions which have been found practicable in the naval and military establishments, afforded the means, of which your Commons thought it their duty to avail themselves, of making a large addition to the fund, to be applied in the course of the present year, to the reduction of the public debt: their conduct upon this, as upon other occasions, was governed by the conviction, that the efficiency and success of the plan, which has been established by Parliament for this important purpose, must essentially tend to the future ease and permanent security of these kingdoms. In the adoption of these measures, your Commons have felt peculiar satisfaction by finding themselves enabled, at the same time, to give some immediate relief to your Majesty's subjects, whose firmness in sustaining the burthens, rendered necessary by a due regard to the maintenance of public credit, and whose spirit of enterprize, and useful industry, have so effectually contributed to advance to the pre-eminence they have attained, the general interests and prosperity of the Empire.

Your Commons, Sir, contemplate with just satisfaction the continued and progressive improvement in the internal situation of the country: to preserve, augment, and diffuse the blessings, of which we are in possession, they consider as the most important of their duties; and, actuated by this principle, which comprehends a zealous and firm attachment to the form of Government under which we live, and a faithful and vigilant attention to the interests and happiness of all classes of their fellow subjects, they are persuaded that those measures, which are the result of it, cannot fail to receive your Majesty's most gracious approbation.

The bills, which I have in my hand, are severally intituled,

“ An act to enable His Majesty to make provision for the establishment of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York and Albany, and also to settle an annuity on her Royal Highness during the term of her natural life, to commence from

" the decease of his said Royal Highness, in case her said Royal Highness shall survive him.

" An act for granting to His Majesty the sum of four hundred thousand pounds, to be issued and paid to the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, to be by them placed to the account of the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt."

To which your Commons, with all humility, intreat your Majesty's Royal assent.

The above bills accordingly received the Royal assent.

The SPEAKER having returned from the House of Lords, reported to the House what bills had received the Royal assent.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved, " That the speech of the Speaker of that House, delivered to His Majesty on the throne, be printed." Ordered.

Mr. HIPPISEY said, he had understood, and that it must be in the recollection of many Members present, that the right honourable Secretary of State, on a former occasion, had pledged himself in that House, that let the news that might, from time to time, arrive from India, be either good or bad, it should be communicated to the Public, through the medium of the Gazette. Some news, Mr. Hippisley said, it was generally believed, had arrived from India, of a nature extremely interesting and important, and that His Majesty's Ministers had received accounts on Monday last from the Malabar coast, not merely confined to our operations there, but to an event at sea, which had taken place between one of His Majesty's ships and the ships of a power not immediately concerned in the war. Of these facts the Public had no accounts from authority before them, as he understood there had been no notification of them in the Gazette. This news had been differently stated in the morning papers; in some more sanguinely, in others less so, as their political connections respectively inclined them to state the facts on which the accounts were founded. If the news should turn out, as some of the public prints had given it, it was not improbable that the right honourable Secretary might think it incumbent on him to propose a vote of approbation, similar to what he had brought forward with so much success

on the subject of our prosperous campaigns by land. Mr. Hippisley said, that at any rate it would be acceptable to that House, and to the Public, to hear what the news was. It was evident, that a letter from the Chief and Council at Tellicherry to the Select Committee of the Directors of the East-India Company had been received, and had been sent to some of the morning papers in which it had that day appeared. And as another proof of the arrival of news from India, he stated that India stock had fallen 10 per cent. within these two or three days. The most formal way to obtain the proper intelligence, in continuation of what had been already before the House, Mr. Hippisley believed, would be for him to move,

“ That there be laid before this House, Copies of the latest
“ intelligence received by any of His Majesty's Ministers, or
“ by the East India Company, relative to the war in India.”

The motion being seconded, it was stated to the House from the Chair.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS observed, that the honourable gentleman had said that he had given a pledge to the House that he would publish in the Gazette every article of news, whether good or bad, that he received from India; he denied that he had ever given any such pledge to the House, and he conceived he should have been wholly unworthy of being entrusted with the situation he had the honour to fill, if he could have been rash enough to give any such pledge. It must at all times be, he said, in the discretion of those entrusted with His Majesty's service, what to publish or what to withhold; in that, as well as every other particular, the King's Ministers were responsible for their conduct. As to authentic intelligence recently received from India, he declared he knew not that any such intelligence had been received, or what the honourable gentleman alluded to. With regard to the subject of the other part of the honourable gentleman's speech, Mr. Dundas declared, he would not say a syllable of any thing so mischievous and pernicious.

Mr. HIPPISELEY insisted that the right honourable gentleman had stated, in the most pointed terms, what he had conceived to be a public pledge for his conduct, with regard to the arrival of all news from India, good or bad. These were his precise words. Mr. Hippisley said, the right honourable gen-

tleman, when he made the pledge in question, had not addressed himself certainly to him, but it was in a debate, that had originated in a motion that he had made, and it was given in answer to something that was said in the course of the debate by an honourable General then near him (General Smith.) He begged leave again to insist, that a letter had been sent from the Chief and Council of Tellicherry, to the Select Committee of Directors, and it had been handed from the India House to some of the morning papers. An honourable Director, who was a Member, had told him in the House, since he came down, that the fact was so, and the honourable Director had put his hand in his pocket for a copy of the letter to shew to him, but it turned out that he had not the letter about him. Mr. Hippisley again challenged the right honourable gentleman to the fact of his having received official news from India on Monday last, and he was never more surprised, when the facts were stated in almost every newspaper, to see a Minister get up, and in his place assert, that he knew nothing of any authentic intelligence from India. He begged to ask, if India stock had not fallen 10 per cent. or near it, within this day or two, and whether the 3 per cents. which the Minister lately talked of paying off at par, had not fallen nearly to 94? Had, he would ask, no infraction of the treaty of commerce existed with a neighbouring nation, as had been stated in the public prints, and French ships been violated by our cruisers in a French port? If the fact was so, no doubt but we should make our *amende honorable*, and the business be liberally terminated. The Public, however, ought to have the earliest information on a subject so highly interesting, and so deeply affecting the public credit of the nation.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER said, he could not help wishing that his honourable friend would withdraw his motion. It was scarcely to be imagined that the right honourable gentleman opposite to him could have been imprudent enough to have pledged himself in the manner which his honourable friend had imagined. Ministers were responsible for their whole conduct, and must be allowed a discretion proportionate. As to transactions of officers of ours with other Powers, such matters were improper to be mentioned in the first instance in that House, and the agitation of them could do no good whatever,

but might lead to mischievous consequences. Upon these considerations, he hoped his honourable friend would withdraw his motion.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, he should make no observations as to the propriety of what had fallen from an honourable friend of his, who had just sat down; it was too obvious to require any comment. As to the letter from the Factory of Tellicherry, it was the first time in his life that he had ever heard that His Majesty's Ministers were bound to publish every single account that came from India; and was it to be supposed, that a letter merely from the Chief and Factors of Tellicherry, was deserving of a place in the Gazette? He only wished the honourable gentleman who made the motion, would consult his friends before he moved questions highly unfit for discussion within those walls.

Mr. HIPPISELEY, in explanation, said, that notwithstanding the right honourable gentleman so strongly denied his pledge, he still would maintain that the very words asserted to have been made use of by the right honourable gentleman, were those he had quoted; and that though he now maintained that letters from the Chief and Council of Tellicherry were not deserving of a place in the Gazette, the right honourable gentleman, when it suited his purposes, had on a former occasion inserted letters from the Chief and Council of Tellicherry in the London Gazette. At present it might not suit his purpose, therefore it was convenient to repel the motion. Mr. Hippisley said, he had moved the House merely *pro forma*, to warrant what he rather meant as a question to the right honourable Secretary, who did not chuse to give the Public any information on the subject of India, but to shelter the whole of his intelligence behind the fracas between the two ships. Mr. Hippisley said, however, he had no difficulty in withdrawing his motion.

Major SCOTT rose to make his promised motion. He entered into the articles of the expence on the part of the prosecution against Mr. Hastings, and observed, that several of the items in the bill of Messrs. Wallis and Troward, Solicitors for that prosecution, was very extraordinary—one in particular, he observed, was much so; it was a trifling article; but he thought it would be a disgrace to that House if it was to be suf-

ferred to remain. The sum of 25 guineas was charged by Mr. Troward for reading all the newspapers from the year 1788 down to the period of making out that bill, in order to see if any libels on the Managers of the Impeachments were written in the name of Major Scott or under his signature. This the honourable Major said was ridiculous, and to suffer it to pass uncensured would be disgraceful to the House. He then enumerated some other articles in Mr. Troward's bill. He observed that the reason why he took the matter up was, that the Lords of the Treasury had observed, that for the first eleven days several thousand pounds had been charged as the expence of the prosecution, and that they had refused to give orders to pay the bill, until the Managers had given reasons for the amount of it. So, in this case, he wished to know whether the Managers had given Mr. Troward directions to read these newspapers, and whether they had given him also directions to do several things which were charged in his bill. The expence of this prosecution was now 33,000*l*. He should desire that Mr. Troward be called on a future day to the bar of the House to give an account of these things. The Major then moved, "That
" such number of copies be printed of the account presented
" to the House, of the expence of carrying on the impeach-
" ment against Warren Hastings, Esq. from the year 1788,
" to the present session, and the correspondence between the
" Managers of that trial and their Solicitor, on the subject of
" the impeachment, as shall be sufficient for the Members of
" this House."

Mr. CHISWELL seconded the motion.

Lord NORTH said a few words. He observed that the Managers were not attacked, and therefore there was no necessity to say any thing. It was with the House to consider whether Mr. Troward had made right charges or not.

Mr. SHERIDAN bore testimony of the respectability of the character of Messrs. Wallis and Troward. He observed that if the honourable gentleman wished to consider the conduct of the Managers as degrading, he was willing to take his share of such degradation. If such orders had been given, he should have no objection to bearing all the severity of the honourable gentleman for such orders. If any gentleman had gone through the trouble of reading all the writings of the ho-

honourable gentleman, he did not think that five and twenty guineas was too much for it.

Major SCOTT said, that supposing that Mr. Troward had in this bill charged in general more than the market price for what he had done, the only thing he wanted to know was, who employed him?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he should not take up the items in the bill alluded to, because he did not think that was necessary. But with regard to the particular instances brought forward by the honourable gentleman, he should think the House would pause awhile, and reflect whether they were not stooping a little too low if they should examine them. The Managers, if they gave directions to others to attend, and to examine whether there were any libels published with a view of prejudicing the Judges of the trial, acted rightly. Whether they did appoint any person for that purpose was another question. If they did, there was a little prodigality in employing any person to peruse the labours of the honourable gentleman, and still more in paying at all for such work; but as the Managers would be accused of prodigality in paying for such work, they rescued themselves again from the blame, and made ample atonement in another respect, by the niggardly reward they allowed for the labour. There never was so niggardly a payment as five-and-twenty guineas for reading any thing that came under the name of Asiaticus, J. S., or John Scott!!—He considered this as one of many attempts that had been made from time to time to slander the Managers, who were entitled to the honourable and liberal protection of the House from all attacks that should be made against them.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the liberal and handsome manner in which he had conducted himself towards the Managers. He was of opinion that if any objections were made to the items of the bill, that House should not enter into the inquiry, but the bill should be referred to a proper officer to be taxed.

Major SCOTT said, he waited until every gentleman had spoke, and he now would use the privilege of reply; though to any thing like reason or argument in opposition to his motion, he had nothing to remark, because nothing that bore the shape of an argument had been offered. Wit and humour,

which he liked as well as any man, he had heard, but no reasons against his motion. Still he would repeat the grounds of his motion, and he defied the abilities of both sides of the House to weaken that strong ground on which he stood.

A trial is commenced, and the Minister finding 3495*l.* expended in eleven days of the trial, orders his secretary to express his alarm at the magnitude of the expences likely to be incurred, unless some measures are taken to diminish the expence in future. The Managers, to whom the letter is addressed, resist the insinuation, and say that a considerable part of this charge is incurred previous to the trial, and is a matter that cannot occur again. The fair inference is, that in future the expence will be very trifling. On the contrary, the 3495*l.* is swelled to near 37,000*l.*; the Treasury, who were so alarmed at the small sum, are silent as to the greater; and all the Major wanted, he said, was to let the House and the Public see the whole accounts, which he affirmed to be most enormous. Why had he ever interfered in it? Because the Treasury pushed the subject forward, when it was almost too trifling for notice, and when he took no part in it; yet they now refused to have it fully investigated, when it became a matter of serious importance. Major Scott, in the course of his speech, said he could not conceive what an honourable gentleman meant by saying that he had brought it forward year after year—He never had meddled in it. The King's Ministers, and an honourable gentleman (Mr. Burges) not now a Member, first brought it forward. He then was silent. But now that it had become a most enormous and unauthorized charge, he had taken it up, and had encountered all the wit and abilities of both sides of the House. But his cause was too good to suffer before the Public from any combination of parties against him.

On the question being put, it was declared from the Chair, that the Noes had it, the Major thereupon divided the House.

Ayes, 0; Noes, 137.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that on the part of those who had for their object the internal regulation of the Royal Burghs in Scotland, every thing had been done to entitle them to have an inquiry made into the subject. They had made out all the allegations of their petition, and they were now before the House. On a former occasion the right honourable gentleman (Mr.

Dundas) had called on him to specify his complaint, and then said he could not go into it at that time—wished that it should not be pursued in that session. To this he assented, and oral and written evidence was afterwards collected to satisfy the scruples of the right honourable gentleman. He had the evidence now ready. The gentlemen on the other side had had their time to send to Scotland, to the proper officers, for any documents they might think fit, for the support of what they might maintain to be the proper defence of the rights belonging to these Royal Burghs; and the question now was, Whether the allegations of the petitions he had presented, complaining of abuses in these Royal Burghs, were true or false. He asserted that abuses, such as had been complained of, did exist. —The right honourable gentleman denied that—there they were at issue, and that was the fact which he wished to have decided—that was the object which he should have in the proposition which he should make; for which purpose he should move for a Committee to inquire into it. He should prefer a Committee of the whole House, but that he would not have any dispute, he should refer it, if the right honourable gentleman wished it, to a select Committee, but as he could not see what objection could be made to either, he should move, “That on Tuesday the 17th instant, this House will resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the matter of the petition, and other papers presented to this House last session of Parliament, relative to the Royal Boroughs of Scotland.”

Mr. DUNDAS said, that differing as he did from the honourable gentleman in every thing that he had brought forward year after year on this subject, it was impossible for him to suffer this motion to pass without opposition. It was to be observed, that at the request of the honourable gentleman himself, last year a resolution was entered into that this subject should be taken into consideration early in the then ensuing session. He wished to know whether the honourable gentleman chused to say, that he conformed to the spirit of that resolution. Was this an early period of the session—the very day, on which the Parliament was to rise for the holidays. Mr. Dundas said, that it was true, that he had no thoughts of returning soon to Scotland; but then it must be allowed, that many gentlemen

from that part of the kingdom were about to return ; it would be inconvenient for them to stay, and would be highly improper that the subject should be discussed in their absence. Indeed, he might say that this was so far from being conformable to the resolution of the House, of taking the subject early into consideration, that it was almost the end of it. Great part of the business of the session was over, and that which remained was only what the House had already began. He certainly had rather that this business should be brought forward by the honourable gentleman, even in his own way, rather than that it should remain from time to time undecided. He knew he differed from some of his friends on this subject. They wished that the subject should not always be discussed. He on the contrary dreaded nothing from the discussion ; but he must confess he wished to have it once settled ; but if the question was to be discussed, let it be done at a proper time. This ought to have been done in the month of February. The honourable gentleman said he had evidence of the charters, and that there were abuses. To this he plainly must object at once, for if the charters were infringed, there was a law offended : in that case the Courts of Scotland were competent to remedy the evil, and consequently there could be no reason for any inquiry in that House. He could not possibly agree to pledge the House to enter into a Committee, unless the honourable gentleman would state the nature of the proposition he had to make in that Committee ; for possibly it might be such, as he should not either think necessary or fit to be put to a Committee.

Mr. SHERIDAN might have been astonished at this mode of objecting to his propositions, one after another regularly, as he made them, did he not know the principle on which they were founded, and the reason for them. The truth was, that they shunned the inquiry, and wished to evade it by any means they could devise ; any thing but a fair and candid contest of the point in issue he expected ; but he would promise gentlemen, on the other side, they should not get over the business in that way. As to the time being too far advanced in the session ; and the idea that business of importance was chiefly over, he must observe in the first place, that it was not in his power, without manifest inconvenience to have brought on this subject in February, as the right honourable gentleman had hinted ought to

have been done; he was obliged to attend to other objects, which it was not for the House to hear—and the more particularly so, when they recollected, that whenever the subject came forward, it was always in the mind of the right honourable gentleman either too late or too early. As to the other point, namely, that most of the business of importance was over, he must say, that if he had not already had so much experience of the shifts and shuffles of the right honourable gentleman on this occasion, he should have been surprised at this. What would he say to his own notice this very day, of bringing forward, six days after the day for this motion, propositions upon the slave trade? Was that important? Was it early enough for that, although too late for a consideration of the Scots Boroughs? Or did he believe that many gentlemen at that time would be in the country, instead of attending to their duty in Parliament?

There were two descriptions of persons in this country: those who attempted to reform every thing, and those who were determined to reform nothing—they were both dangerous persons; but in the degree of danger from these doctrines, there was no comparison. No man could be so great an enemy to the constitution of England itself, as he who maintained it was perfect, and on that principle resisted all attempts to reform it, and branded those who attempted it as wild speculators and dealers in dangerous innovation.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER professed himself entirely against the motion, as a point of vain, vague, and speculative theory, that could not be reduced to practice. He meant the object of having a Committee—namely, a reform in the theory of a constitution, which had no practical defects or alarms. He thought it extraordinary that the honourable gentleman, who had year after year brought this subject forward, should not now be ready to proceed in it. With respect to the constitution of England, he took occasion to observe, that those who are always ready to open a shop for reform were not friends to the people. He should be ready to deliver his sentiments on that subject, whenever it should be brought forward. He was ready to meet any inquiry into that subject, because he was convinced, that the more the practice of the constitution of

England was looked into and compared with the visionary theory of other people, the more would it be admired.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he thought that the general objections to the present system ought to be known, and the abuses pointed out, before the House went into a Committee; when that was the case, and the honourable gentleman could point out the specific remedy to be adopted, the sooner the question came to be discussed the better. He thought the honourable gentleman had fixed on a wrong day, because the second reading of the Westminster police bill stood for the 17th; and though he trusted there was not much difference of opinion on this subject, yet if it should go into any length of discussion, it could not be expected that those who brought it forward would give way to the discussion of the honourable gentleman's motion, notice of which was subsequent to the other.

Mr. SHERIDAN hoped there would be no occasion to put off his motion after the day he had mentioned, but must say one word respecting the lateness of the session, which was, that he recollected a time when the right honourable gentleman opposite had brought forward a great constitutional question, respecting a reform in the representation of the people, even at a later period than what he now proposed for this question.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that with regard to the motion which he had the honour to bring forward in 1782, relative to a parliamentary reform, he must observe, and the House might recollect, that though it was April or May before he brought it on, that could not be called late in the session of that year. It was at a period when party divisions ran high, and when there was as full an attendance as was ever remembered—neither could he see any analogy between his motion that year and that which the honourable Member proposed on this business, particularly as the honourable gentleman had always asserted that there was no intention whatever, by his motion to make any alteration in the parliamentary representation of the Royal Burghs. From the manner in which the honourable gentleman treated this business all along, he scarcely believed that his clients would give him much credit for his assiduity.

Mr. SHERIDAN contended that there were many reasons which prevented him from pressing the business; formerly he had often thought it an improper time to push any thing that

looked liked reform, because, by some strange perversion any improvement proposed, was converted into ideas of innovation and revolution. He had, however, now got possession of sufficient materials, and had given up his own opinion to that of others, and he was determined to bring the motion on. He did not mind what the right honourable gentleman thought of his assiduity, but if he had been slow, the right honourable gentleman would find that he was secure in his purpose, and he had heard nothing to make him postpone the business longer. As to reforms, he thought those who called for unnecessary reform, and those who said that there was no occasion for any reform, were equally enemies to constitutional principles.

Sir J. S. ERSKINE thought the House was no ways pledged, nor ought they to go into any Committee, till they were convinced that the grievances complained of really existed; in his opinion they did not.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER was of the same opinion, and said there was a material difference between the parliamentary reform of the right honourable gentleman opposite, and that of his honourable friend; the first was a practical reform, the other a mere theoretic speculation. As to the constitution of this country, he was always of opinion, that the more its principles were known and practised, the more it would be admired, and ought to be adhered to; the less attention of course ought to be paid to systems merely theoretic and visionary.

Mr. SHERIDAN thought all the objections stated would have come in time enough in the Committee. He enumerated the materials, such as the charters and sets of Burghs which had been violated with impunity, and many other facts which he could prove when the Committee sat; and contended, the only opposition therefore that could be made, was as to the time of the session, upon which he thought enough had been said to obviate it. He contended, that there was no power of control vested in any Court in Scotland over the transactions of Magistrates, which was an important point at issue between the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) and him.

Mr. DUNDAS replied, and after a few words from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the motion was put and negatived.

After which, Mr. Sheridan moved, " That on Wednesday, the 18th of April, this House do take into consideration the petitions and other papers on their table, relative to abuses practised in the internal management of the Royal Boroughs in Scotland ;" which was agreed to.

The House then adjourned to

Tuesday, 17th April.

Mr. FOX moved, " That the order of the day for the House to go into a Committee of the whole House to-morrow, to consider of the circumstances of the African slave trade, be read," which being done,

Mr. Fox said, that his motive for making this motion, was to take care that this important business should be brought forward for the farther discussion of Parliament, without loss of time. He understood that the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) was to bring on something by way of regulation on this subject, and that the day appointed for that purpose was Monday next. He knew not what measure was intended to be proposed : he hoped it would be a bill for the speedy abolition of the trade. He was sure that no time ought to be lost. He felt the delay even of these six days very seriously, considering the advanced state of the session. The only thing he could now do, however, was to move that the order for the Committee of the whole House to-morrow upon this subject, should be discharged, and appointed afterwards for Monday next.— He hoped that what the right honourable gentleman should propose upon the subject would be brought forward in such a shape, that those who wished for the immediate abolition of the slave trade, as well as those who were contented with having it gradually, could vote for it. He hoped and trusted also it would be successful. His chief object now was, to keep the House and the Public to the point, and that it should not be permitted to sleep for a moment, but that it should make such a progress as to be in readiness for the other House of Parliament at a time that would not admit of affected arguments for delay to another year. He certainly had not changed his mind on this subject. He could wish an immediate and total abolition ; but if that was not to be obtained, it was essential that no time should be

lost in bringing forward whatever other regulation should be deemed expedient, and he hoped to hear the whole subject discussed on Monday. For these reasons, he moved, "That the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to-morrow, to consider of the circumstances of the African slave trade, be discharged."

Ordered.

He then moved, "That the House do resolve itself into that Committee on Monday next." Ordered.

The new bill for the reduction of the national debt was read a third time, and passed.

Mr. DUNDAS moved the order of the day, which was for the second reading of the bill for regulating the office of Justice of the Peace for such part of the county of Middlesex as lies in and near the metropolis, &c.

Mr. MAINWARING observed, that this was a matter of very great importance to the Public. It was proper that gentlemen should understand what the bill was, and that it should be discussed in a full House.

Mr. DUNDAS observed, that as the honourable gentleman who brought in the bill was now absent, he had brought the subject forward. It was a bill, on the principle of which he believed there could not be much difference of opinion; or, if there should, ample opportunity would be given for the statement of those objections; for he should propose that it should not be committed until Wednesday se'nnight. This appeared to him to be fully sufficient to meet all objection, as any amendments to any part that might now appear wrong, or any deficiency that ought to be supplied by additional clauses, or any other sort of alteration, might be made in the Committee. He saw no reason why the bill should not now be read a second time.

Mr. MAINWARING said, he always understood that this was the stage in which opposition could fairly be offered to a bill. He must beg leave to mention what occurred to him on the subject. He, perhaps, might have more local information than others on this business. Upon looking over this bill, he could not flatter himself that he saw much advantage which could arise to the Public from it in its present state. He thought it might do some good, but a great deal of mischief.

It was true, as it had been stated, that the office of Justice of the Peace, for part of the metropolis, wanted regulation. He wished that the practices of some of these Justices should be corrected. They did some harm, and yet they did some good; but this bill did not appear to be calculated to remedy the evils that were most to be complained of in the office of Justice of the Peace. He wanted to strengthen the arm of the Magistrate, in order to suppress vice. That was not done by this bill.—Another objection occurred. It was a bill for all the metropolis, which was much too extensive to receive any real benefit from the bill in question. No power was given them to be active; they were to wait for persons to come and exhibit their complaints. If so, he was sure it would be of great disservice. No care would be taken to suppress robberies. They should, at each office, have at least ten men for this purpose; for in this way they would have a great number of persons to apprehend. Here they were penning a law without having any security of the effect of it, for it pointed out nothing for the Magistrates to do of their own accord, but merely that they should take cognizance of things brought before them. He wished to know on what foundation these offices were to proceed?—Were they to be something similar to that at Bow-street?—He owned he should in that respect approve them; but this seemed to be a bill founded on the present policy of Administration, instead of being on a general principle. If so, any future Administration might change it, or it might be changed by the present Administration in different circumstances. He wanted the people to know what system of policy would permanently be adopted. The plan was shewn to him some time ago. He said it was a cold feeble measure that might do some little good, but a great deal of mischief. The author of the bill said, he should like a bill of more general extent in its principle, but he was afraid if he brought it forward, Government would not assist him, on account of the expence of a complete system. Mr. Mainwaring said, he was pleased to see the right honourable Secretary of State second the motion for leave to bring in the bill, for he was in hopes of seeing a solid system of policy brought forward, preferable to that which we now have; but that hope, by perusing the present bill, was quite vanished, and he was now left to wish that he knew what the system was.

With regard to the expence of the bill, he understood that it was expected by those who penned it, that such expence should be defrayed out of the fees taken at the offices, for penalties imposed on certain persons offending against various acts of Parliament. If they relied on those penalties, he was confident they would be deceived; and if ever they should stretch that principle, in order to make the penalties answer the expence, the bill would, so far from being a benefit, become a nuisance. With respect to the number of offices to be appointed for carrying on the object of the bill, he confessed he saw great objection. Five offices he thought too few for any thing like convenience to the inhabitants of the metropolis. Those of Mary-le-bone, a large town of itself, must all come to an office at Soho. The inhabitants of St. Pancras were to go to Islington; but above all, the inhabitants of the east part of the metropolis were to have but one office; this, he was sure, was quite inadequate. There was no part of the King's dominions that required greater vigilance, attention, and ability in a Magistrate, than this particular district. The inhabitants were a hardy laborious race of men, but who, from the roughness of their habits, were desperate, when they were either misguided by their own desires, or misled by others. In short, the bill, in this respect, was deplorably defective, and would never be found to answer any thing like a good purpose. He observed also, that there was no regulation made in the bill for alehouses. The last observation he had to make on this bill, was the manner of appointing the Magistrates. It would give to the Crown a prodigious deal of patronage, and that too in the most exceptionable way.

Mr. DUNDAS observed, that the first part of the honourable gentleman's objection could hardly be said to be fair. It was a complaint, that the bill did not go far enough in granting power to the Magistrates. This the House would do him the justice to recollect he mentioned at the time the business was opened, and when the House gave leave to bring in the bill, and at that time objections being started to that idea, he did not wish to retard the progress of the bill, and he consented for that time not to pursue that thought any farther, but reserved to himself the right of renewing it on some future day, if he should think he could propose any plan that should appear to

him to be a proper one, and he made the same answer now. The honourable gentleman had misconceived the nature of this bill, if he thought that the whole of the police of this metropolis will be changed by it. The power of the different Magistrates will all of them remain entire, as if this bill had never been thought of. It did not infringe on the different powers of the Magistrates, to enforce good order and preserve a good police. It only appointed certain offices, at which public business should be transacted, and enacted that no fees should be taken at any other office. As to the objection against the Magistrates being paid out of the money taken at the office, there really was nothing in it; the case was so now; the only difference was, that now fees were taken for the support of the Magistrates, whereas, by the bill in question, the penalties levied shall go to the fund, out of which the Magistrates shall have fixed salaries. If this should hereafter appear improper to the House, it could be altered in the Committee. As to the objection, that the bill was not extensive enough, that was a point to go to a Committee, but could not be made an objection to the bill itself, the professed principle of which was, to correct abuse in the conduct of trading Justices. Indeed, he did not mean to say that the bill was sufficiently extensive, and he inclined to think it should be more so. The borough might be brought under the same regulation. This was also another object for the consideration of the Committee. With regard to the question of patronage to the Crown, he could not see what alteration this bill made in that respect; for he understood that at this very moment the sole appointment of all those who hold the commission was in the Crown, and he wanted to know how the Magistracy of this country was to be carried on but in this way? If it was wrong, that would be matter for future consideration; but he protested he did not see what alteration for the better could be made in that respect. However, there might be many things thought of in the Committee. Perhaps it might be proper to introduce some checks of a certain nature. Some had an idea, that persons fit to be appointed, should be only those who shall be returned so at the quarter sessions. All these were fit objects for the consideration of the Committee. The questions here were, Whether the daily business of the most importance in this metropolis, should be

transacted through the medium of trading Justices, or by the plan laid down by the present bill? and whether this was a fit matter to be considered by a Committee of that House on a future day?

Mr. FOX said, he did not object to the bill now, understanding that it was to be discussed on a future occasion. He had not had all the instruction he wished, and hoped to have, from his constituents on this subject. But as the bill appeared, there seemed to him to be two objections to it; one, that it will do no good whatever; the other, that it is likely to do some mischief. He did not know whether the objections taken to this bill were unanswerable or not, but he was sure they had not been answered, and therefore he should be glad that another discussion should take place, in order that the promoters of the bill might have an opportunity to improve their arguments. With regard to the patronage which this bill was supposed to create, it would certainly be thrown into that scale, and add weight to that which, in his opinion, was already much too heavy, and which he never wished, and now he would not be suspected to wish, to be the heaviest. The Magistrates who were to act under this bill were to be appointed by the King; they were to receive offices of profit, for there are to be salaries given. Now this was patronage, and patronage of great consequence too; for although the King had the appointment, the whole management of it was under the immediate direction and control of the Minister, who has had also the appointment of these trading Justices. Now he wished to know, what the security was which the Public had, that any benefit whatever would result from this bill? What security was there, that he who appointed these trading Justices, who are now said to be unworthy of their station, will appoint men of better character or capacity to succeed them? There is the same person to appoint both, with the same motives to influence his appointment, namely, patronage! He did not think in the least degree likely that these persons would be better appointed than their predecessors. However, he should not make any opposition now, but reserve what he had to say for the next discussion.

Mr. WILBERFORCE supported the bill. He observed, that what the justices receive now, they receive out of fees,

whereas hereafter their receipt would not depend upon fees, but on a stated salary, which led to independence, and consequently it was fair to expect that their conduct would be better.

Mr. FOX observed, that this could make no difference in the character of a person at the time of his appointment, nor did it convey any idea of security to the Public, that none but fit persons should be appointed.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that as it now stands, the Crown has the appointment of the Magistrates. After they were so appointed, they are liable to the temptation which receiving fees throws in their way, and it is by these fees they subsist. By this bill the Crown would have the appointment, but afterwards the persons appointed would not be under any temptation on account of fees, because they would be supported by a regular salary; if they acted improperly, they would be dismissed.

Mr. SHERIDAN observed, that the business now before the House, the Justices' trade, had long occupied his attention. He had more than once, with a gentleman of the law, thought of something like a plan for its regulation. But the point by which he had always been checked, was the consideration of undue influence. He could not hit upon a plan that would prevent the thing from being or becoming a job. All the systems of regulation which he had seen in this respect, were nothing more, and he was afraid never would be any thing else than a job. He admitted that there were necessary regulations with regard to the fees of these persons, but they would all be trifled with and evaded. As to the remark, that they should be dismissed from their offices if they did not act right, he feared the security in that respect was not very solid or satisfactory to those who wished to see the Magistrates independent. He thought they would lose their offices if they voted wrong at an election; and so no doubt they would if they procured votes by remitting the penalties of the lottery act—or excused an elector, or an election agent of a Court candidate, part of an excise fine for election service. Care, no doubt, would be taken they should act with integrity in these cases. To be serious, he was convinced that this system of police was nothing more than a system of influence.

Mr. M. MONTAGU said a few words in favour of the bill.

The question was then put, and the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow se'nnight.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 18th April.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that from what had been said on the other side of the House upon this subject, he was in hopes that his motion for the Speaker leaving the chair would have been assented to as a matter of course, and he still hoped that when gentlemen recollected the whole of the subject now brought forward, they would not persevere in their opposition to that mode of proceeding, and that they would not endeavour to induce, or call upon the House to depart from its own pledge, and that they would not offer an insult to a body of men, whom he had the honour to support on the present occasion. If they did take this method of opposition, he must say, they did not themselves seem to recollect how the matter in question stood, and for the purpose of refreshing their recollection he should state the real situation of the business.

Some years since a number of petitions from the Royal Burghs of Scotland, unanimously pointing out grievances, and demanding redress, were presented to that House. The number of Royal Burghs were in all sixty-six, and at this time fifty of them had concurred in their complaint. These composed a vast majority of all the trade, commerce, wealth, and population of the Burghs of North Britain. They composed also a great part of the rank and dignity of it. Persons thus situated, and thus complaining, were worthy of the attention of that House, and most particularly that of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas). These petitions stated the general mismanagement, misapplication of money, dilapidation of property, and various injuries and grievances sustained by them in consequence of the usurped authority of certain self-elected Magistrates in these Burghs, and that to these complaints there was at present no redress to be procured under the law of Scotland. They had sought for redress, but were unable to obtain

it in such a situation. He was clearly of opinion that the only application they could make was an application to Parliament; for he maintained that it was a decided point that there was not now a Court of competent jurisdiction to afford relief to these complainants. If that was the case, the application to Parliament was correct and regular. This was denied by gentlemen on the other side. Here the parties were at issue. The point now remaining to be tried should be submitted to a Committee of Inquiry—if they could prove these facts, they would immediately fall under the wisdom of Parliament, to have that redress which is due from its justice. Three sessions ago he presented a bill to this House, with a view to have these complaints removed, by removing the cause of them. The bill was read a first time. When it came to a second reading, he then pledged himself to prove every article of allegation in these petitions. The gentlemen opposite to him said, that they were grievances of great magnitude. They admitted, that if they could be proved, redress ought to, and should be, granted; but they said he was irregular in his application, and that he ought to institute a Committee of Inquiry, and if he proved his facts, redress must follow: upon this he withdrew his bill, conceiving that then he was at issue with them upon the facts of these grievances, and that if he proved them, redress would follow. He then proceeded, he said, to the establishment of these facts, for which purpose he caused copies to be made of all the charters of these Burghs, and all the setts. He sought for the accounts of the public property, and all alienations, &c. The next session only a part of these was produced, some of the Burghs being deficient in that respect; afterwards, however, the whole became complete. Last session of Parliament the whole came before the House, and it was proposed to go into a Committee of Inquiry upon the case, that facts might be ascertained, upon which to ground the future proceeding of the House. Upon this the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) did not pretend to deny these facts, nor had he an idea in his mind, that the right honourable gentleman harboured a thought of insulting the people of Scotland so grossly, as to say to them, Now you have collected your proofs, you have prepared to submit your case to the House of Commons, you shall not be heard, I will not now consent to

inquire, you shall be repulsed—I was only jesting with you formerly ; now I tell you plainly, that apparent frankness was a mere mockery. Nothing of this kind was said, or conveyed last year. On the contrary, there was an implied assent to the inquiry, only it was then stated to be too late in the session. Upon this principle, and seemingly fair prospect of ultimate success, a motion was made on the 27th of May last, and the House entered into a resolution, which he begged the House to hear. (The resolution was then read, the purport of it was that the House would early in the then next session, take into consideration the state of the Royal Burghs.) Here it was evident, that it was the intention of the House to go fairly into this inquiry. This could only be done in a Committee, and to refuse a Committee, was to refuse every thing that could relate to the subject. He had a right to call on the right honourable gentleman, not only from the duty he owed to the people of North Britain, but also from a sense he ought to have of his own personal honour to consent to this inquiry. He did not expect at least he should hear, at least he should not be content with hearing, that it was not now early in the session ; it was too mean a quibble to be attended to for a moment—it was too paltry an excuse to merit an answer. Was the session so far advanced as to leave no business remaining that was of importance sufficient to be discussed, to insure a full attendance ? was not the business of the slave trade of that description ? Did not the Chancellor of the Exchequer bring forward his plan for a reformation of the representative body of the whole kingdom, at a much later period ?—Did not the right honourable gentleman himself bring forward his own India inquiries at a later period ?—Did he suppose that the whole body of the people of Scotland would be satisfied, and that it was quite safe for him to treat them and their representations with contempt ; if he did, and if he thought himself possessed of address sufficient to amuse them in that way, he feared the right honourable gentleman a little deceived himself upon that subject. The claims of this great body of men must be attended to by the House. What did the right honourable gentleman mean to do with the pledge of that House, when instead of submitting to inquiry, or stating by argument any principle of justice on which the inquiry could be refused, he sheltered him-

self under flimsy evasions, and petty cavils. The fact was, that he knew that inquiry would produce truth—truth would demand justice—justice would be fatal to the cause of the right honourable gentleman. He was ashamed to have his cause exposed; but let him remember he was vigilantly watched in England, and would be faithfully reported in Scotland, and that if he thought these petty shifts would pass upon the people of North Britain, he was deceived in them, and did not know them so well as he thought he did, nor would he be sure of the continuance of their favour.

The other objection was a little curious, as it had been started on a former day. He meant that the other party called on him to shew a specific remedy to the abuse he complained of, before the House should enter into this inquiry. This was recommended to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as an observation to be made; and it was a little hard on that right honourable gentleman, because it was giving him a ridiculous character to support; for he said on a former occasion to him, “Do not call upon us for a remedy until you have shewn us “your grievance.” Now that was the very thing; for before he asked for a remedy, he proposed, in a Committee of Inquiry, to prove his grievance, and if he failed, he would be content to abandon his application for the remedy. But it was too ridiculous to call upon him to shew his grievance, if they refused him the only means by which he could shew it: and in refusing, pretend to say that the refusal was because he did not specify his remedy. But this was not all; he had, in fact, produced the remedy; it was specified in his bill, and the principle of it was admitted in the debate on the second reading, and the only reason then given for not passing the bill was, that first there should have been established a proof of the grievance. He was willing to go farther, he would state what the object was of his bill now. It was to abolish the self-electing power of the Magistrates in these Boroughs—without which nothing like justice could be done to the body of people, who complained, for all attempts at palliations, however tried, would be found fruitless.

He had heard it said that there were such grievances in England as well as in Scotland. Was this any reason for giving redress to neither; was justice to be defeated by a community

of oppression? If he was to be asked, whether there was any abuse in the Boroughs in England, he said, he was ashamed to confess he had no doubt of it: but he must follow up that confession with an observation, that when any extraordinary waste or misapplication of the property of a borough took place in England, there was something like a mode of inquiry into it possible; but that was not the case in Scotland—there there was no Court of Judicature known, which could admit the inquiry. Supposing, for a moment, that there was no Court in England competent to entertain inquiries into the abuses of officers in boroughs, and that great abuses were stated to exist in three-fourths of the whole kingdom, what would be the fate of a motion in that House for a Committee of Inquiry? Would it not be granted? most willingly and eagerly. Why should the case be different with regard to Scotland? and why should not every Member of that House think himself bound to examine into the abuses of both, or assent to a proposal for a Committee to inquire? He did not think that the people of Scotland should be treated in that way. The right honourable gentleman, particularly, should not treat them so—he ought to know them better, than to think they would for ever bear such insults. Let but the truth appear, and he would pledge himself that it would appear, if the Committee was granted, that not one of the allegations in the petitions would turn out to be false, but that all the abuses of which they complained would be made manifest.

It had been asserted by the right honourable gentleman, that there were in Scotland Courts competent to take cognizance of the grievances specified in the petitions. He did not wish to give his opinion on the law of Scotland, without first having consulted the opinion of others, who were much more competent to decide that case than himself; but he had consulted a gentleman of great legal knowledge on that subject, and the result of that consultation was, that there was not any Court of Judicature that could take cognizance of the grievances stated in these petitions. How was this point to be settled? If it should afterwards be found, that there was any competent jurisdiction for the hearing of these complaints, and, on proof, redressing them, then the petitioners should be sent thither; but it was ridiculous to refuse to hear, whether the case was so or

not, merely on the assertion of any individual, who wished to stifle the inquiry. He stated, that he wished for nothing to be granted in consequence of this inquiry, even supposing him to prove the abuses stated in the petitions, but what was granted in the different charters, and which had been defeated by abuse having grown into usage, and now in Scotland usage had become paramount to all law. It was not therefore favour that he was asking, it was justice—It was not to introduce any new mode, but to amend an old one—It was to reform abuse.

Of late it had become a fashion to decry every thing in the nature of reform. It was carried so far as to become a principle in support of general oppression; this brought on a temper that would hardly hear of any thing like reform. Opinions were entertained that reform led to innovation—innovation to revolution—revolution to anarchy and disorder, and therefore that a door should not be opened to reform. No man who knew the spirit of the constitution of this country could support this sort of principle. It was the best part of our constitution, that it contained a principle of reform in its very nature, and we had at this day nothing in it that was beautiful, that had not been forced from tyrants, and taken from the usurpations of despotism. But there was something, it was said, in the present time, that should deter us from thinking of reform now, and that was, because there had been a revolution in France; there was a time when some persons thought that nobody should even allude to it—that it was unsafe and almost indecent to mention it. That time was passed, and we had now no choice upon that subject. It was an event well known to all ranks and descriptions of persons. It made part of the contemplation of the studies—the conversation of the social and communicative. It formed part of the taste of our public entertainments, and mingled in our melody. It was no longer an object to be dreaded, and with the sober and the serious, the only question was, “What wisdom was to be gained by it?” For with regard to the event itself, and the peace of this country in consequence of it, there needed be but one feeling upon the subject. Exultation and joy, at the downfall of the despotism of France, the greatest enemy England ever had. That despotism, whose ambitious, turbulent, and restless, spirit cost

England so many thousands of her subjects, and so many millions of her money—that despotism, that foe to the happiness of the human race, was destroyed. Soon should we—indeed we already had—felt the beneficial effects of the French revolution. The National Assembly of France was the best Committee of Supply England ever had. The safety of our possessions in India was owing to the French revolution, and therefore that event, in this point of view, was the greatest blessing that could happen to this country. By assuring us tranquillity abroad, it afforded us leisure to look into abuses at home, and neither to be intimidated into dangerous compliance with popular clamour on the one hand, nor too ready to listen to the fears of the most timid, on the danger of innovation, on the other—such was the season to correct abuses. But according to the opinions of some of the most moderate and well-informed men in this country, there were a number of principles maintained by the National Assembly of France, which would militate ultimately against the true principle of well regulated liberty. Upon this he could only say, that if all the eloquent octavos, that were filled with the highest praise of the French revolution, were changed into folios, all that could be said in them would be at last reducible to this; that the destruction of a despotic Government is an act of the highest wisdom in a people, and that, when this was accomplished, the higher order, and the most enlightened class, will feel, and really possess, all the natural advantages of their fair superiority; while the lower orders of the people will fall into the rank of useful industry, which was the nerve and sinew of a well-regulated society. But this theory of France had been carried too far, and it had been brought into discussion in this country: that it had been brought into discussion, he admitted; that the theory had been carried too far was matter of speculative opinion, that had nothing to do with the real interest of this country, and upon which he should say nothing; but that if France under the reign of despotism had produced statesmen capable of regenerating a government all at once, or a people capable of instantly performing the duties and observing the subordination necessary to a free constitution, he should have thought the vices of her old government far less than he did at present. The thing for us to attend to was a rational and sober reformation of abuses, at

a time when there was nothing to interrupt us. This was the only way by which we should be sure of avoiding the evil that might attend a reformation by violence ; for if to every request of the people, their representatives refused to listen, under an idea that some encroachments might be made on the prerogative of the Crown, the effect in time would be, that the people would suspect Parliament of having too intimate an alliance with the power of the Crown, and by this popular distrust, they would be at last, in their defence, driven to the Throne for shelter against popular resentment, and compelled to fortify the place in which they took refuge ; this was the most sure way of making a real division in the country. It was well known, that every body thought upon public subjects. There was a spirit of inquiry excited among all classes of men ; it increased every day and every hour ; experience taught us it was impossible to check it ; wisdom ought to teach us to prevent it from becoming dangerous ; for so it would become, if the people had any reason to suspect that their grievances were treated with contempt. By first resolving only to procure redress for grievances they might fly to anarchy and confusion. If we suffered this, it would be too late to talk about the probable mischief of reform. He must then say to the House, that unless they wished to encourage the idea, that the people will have no relief, however pressing their necessities, or however just their claims—unless they wished to tell the people they really had no friends in the House of Commons, and that their rights were totally neglected, they would yield redress with cheerfulness when fairly claimed. This was the only way to keep the people of this country contented with their condition. One proof of a disposition to attend to the wishes of the people would have more effect in preserving their attachment to the constitution, than all the eloquent speeches that had been made to praise it. These were not sentiments peculiar to him. The propriety of them must be felt by every man who heard him. He rejoiced that they were not merely felt, but adopted as a principle of action—that men, whose characters, situations, and consequence, placed them above the suspicion of sinister motives, had resolved to rear a standard, to which all who sought redress of grievance, or reform of abuse, by loyal and constitutional means, might repair with confidence. This

was the true course to prevent the people from putting themselves under leaders whose object might be not so much to reform as to destroy. Those who had undertaken it would, he trusted, follow it up with the same youthful ardour, but more steady perseverance, than the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Pitt), that reform which had been the first object of his political life. Indeed it was but a bad compliment to the constitution to say it was a building which we could not touch without the danger of its overthrow. Such a building the people would be too ready to view as an old edifice, so far decayed as to be incapable of support. He who now obstinately refused to listen to proposals for a temperate reform, must be destitute of prudence and discretion. He then moved,

“ That the House of Commons having received petitions
 “ from forty-six of the Royal burghs of Scotland, complaining
 “ of various grievances in the Government of the said burghs;
 “ and the House, after taking the same into consideration,
 “ having on the 17th of February, 1788, ordered, that notor-
 “ rial copies and setts of the Royal burghs should be laid be-
 “ fore this House—and then having made several other orders
 “ for accounts of the cess, stent or land tax, levied in the said
 “ burghs, and of the sums of money paid the Receiver Gene-
 “ ral on account of the same—and for accounts of the reve-
 “ nues of the said burghs—and for accounts of the lands of the
 “ said burghs, alienated since the Union—and then having on
 “ the 10th of June, 1790, renewed such orders, and in obe-
 “ dience to the said orders, a great many accounts having been
 “ laid before this House, it is incumbent on this House to pro-
 “ ceed to the examination of the said papers and accounts, in
 “ such mode as shall best ascertain whether the grievances com-
 “ plained of are true, and what remedy this House ought to
 “ apply to such grievances.”

The LORD ADVOCATE OF SCOTLAND said, he considered it his duty to give some opinion upon the subject now before the House, in the manner which appeared to him the most proper and best adapted to the real interests of Scotland, and this he did without the least regard to popularity, because if he was conscious that he spoke or acted from conviction and right motives, he held in thorough contempt any popularity that might be gained by supporting the motion, or

any unpopularity that might attend opposition to it. The honourable gentleman had laid much stress upon the contents of the petitions, and other papers on the table, by arguing that they exhibited grievances and complaints that required an immediate inquiry, as well as redress. In his opinion, the complaints in those petitions might be divided into three branches; first, that the inhabitants of burghs in Scotland were liable to the illegal exaction of taxes, for which there was no adequate remedy. Secondly, that there were instances of gross misrule and misconduct by the Magistrates of burghs, in the dilapidation of public property, and general discharge of their duty; and lastly, that there was no Court of Judicature in Scotland to which those Magistrates were responsible for what they did, or that had any control over their conduct, however improper it might be. The two first, he contended, were positions entirely unfounded, and, as such, would always meet with opposition from him when they were brought forward as grounds of complaint. The last he would admit in part, as far as respected the production of accounts, and lamented that there was such a deficiency in the law of Scotland, as he must acknowledge that to be; and if a specific proposition was brought forward, either in the form of a bill, or any other way that could remedy this defect, he would most willingly join issue with the honourable gentleman, and be happy to support it, provided the regulations were such as went merely to remedy an existing grievance, and did not at all interfere with the constitutional system of the Scotch burghs, as established by experience, and confirmed by the usage and practice of so long a period. If, therefore, the honourable gentleman confined himself merely to this, he would find that he had no such fears about the word "reform" as the honourable gentleman had stated, and that, in fact, he was no enemy to reform, when it was evidently necessary, though he never would agree to what seemed to be the principal object and aim of the honourable gentleman's endeavours, a complete subversion of the present constitution of the burghs of Scotland, in order to substitute a new one, which, in his opinion, would in no degree tend to remedy any grievance, but, on the contrary, be at best a mere speculation, which he would not hesitate to say was fraught with dangerous consequences. The honourable gen-

tleman had stated all those petitions and complaints as coming from the Royal burghs of Scotland, but this he begged leave to deny ; for the petitions, he contended, did not in general come from the Royal burghs. When he allowed that there ought to be some remedy on the particular point of there being no Court in Scotland competent to take into their cognizance the accounts of Magistrates, and wished to see a proper remedy applied, he thought doing so could not be called an half measure, or palliative, as the honourable gentleman had stated every thing to be that came short of that total subversion of the present constitution of the Royal burghs, which the honourable gentleman wanted ; while this was contended for, and that the power of self-election, as it was called, in those burghs, ought to be taken away, he, for one, should always oppose every attempt which favoured such a measure. With regard to what had been said about illegal exaction of money from the inhabitants of the Scotch burghs, and that there was no remedy, he declared that statement to be completely wrong ; and he would add, that he had never even heard of any complaint of that nature having been made. He recurred to the period of the revolution, and the subsequent treaty of union, when it was the object of both countries to participate in every advantage that could be suggested for their mutual interests. At this time it did not appear that those heavy grievances, now so much felt, had existed ; nor was there then, or till lately, any complaint against them. He had been bred, he might say from his infancy, to the Scotch bar, and had not yet been in any of those situations which the honourable gentleman alluded to, and which might have jostled the law of Scotland out of his head ; and it certainly must be much jostled in any man's head, who asserted, that there was no Court of Judicature in Scotland, competent to take cognizance of illegal exactions of money by Magistrates from the inhabitants, upon whatever pretence it might be levied. He remembered two cases, one from Aberdeen and another from Glasgow, on which he, as an advocate, had entered with great warmth of declamation, where the Court of Session so far received and entertained the complaint of the Burghesses against the Magistrates, that they entered into the merits of the case ; and having thoroughly examined it, saw that the complaint was frivolous and groundless, and de-

creed accordingly. He would insist, in the face of the honourable gentleman, and of any lawyer in Scotland, that if any Magistrate exacted taxes from, or dilapidated the property of, the Burgeses, he was amenable to the laws of his country, because there was a power in the Court of Session to inquire into, and grant redress in all such cases. In his official situation, he would lend his name to such informations. This he gave as his opinion, and concluded by stating his opposition to going into any Committee of Inquiry, because that might give the country reason to think that the grievances really existed, whereas he believed they did not.

Mr. FOX said, that before he said a word on the present motion precisely, he wished to make a few observations on the statements of the noble and learned Lord who spoke last, for they appeared to him to be totally unparliamentary. He meant that when the question was, Inquiry, or no Inquiry, that it was not right to set assertion against assertion. He conceived, that when any Member of that House said, "I have a fact" "which appears to me to be true," the only way to dispose of that was either to give the inquiry, that the fact might be ascertained, or to say we admit the fact to be true, but we are of opinion no inquiry ought to be granted, because it is not of sufficient importance for us to waste our time upon its investigation. But when a fact was stated by one honourable Member of that House, and the possibility of it denied by another, on account of its atrociousness, then least of all should an inquiry be refused, because then it ceased to be interesting to one side only, it became interesting to both; it became as much the duty of the House to be tender to a party falsely accused, as attentive to the accuser; and how could the falsity of the accusation be made manifest, and innocence clearly set free from suspicion, but by inquiry? Therefore the learned Lord was unparliamentary, when he maintained the impropriety of inquiring into a fact, because its atrociousness was evidence that it could not be true, and that therefore inquiry would be futile.

Another argument of the learned gentleman was not more happy. He said there were three objects of complaint, or there were three grounds stated of grievance, of which one only existed. What then—"You must state your remedy to them

“all, or you shall not have this inquiry.” How was this—was it the case at any time in the practice of Parliament? Was it the case in the slave trade, that had been so vehemently opposed whenever any part of a reform was sought? Most indubitably it was not. An honourable gentleman, to whom the Public was so much indebted for his honourable and anxious exertions for the abolition of that traffic, and for his perseverance, had thought that the slave trade ought immediately and totally to be abolished—so did he; but another opinion was stated, and a gradual abolition was proposed, to which the House, in his opinion, very imprudently agreed, because he thought the immediate abolition better. What then; did the House refuse farther inquiry, because they did not agree in the remedy proposed? Not so, for they had agreed to enter into a farther. This observation of the learned Lord was no better than the former. But supposing the reasoning to be as parliamentary as he thought it ridiculous, what were we to think of the probability of the truth of the case, as stated by the learned Lord? He had said, that in all the Royal burghs there were none of the abuses complained of. He confessed he had a high respect for the inhabitants of North Britain, on account of their integrity and abilities, but he would not pay them such a compliment as to suppose that there were no abuses in any of their burghs, while he knew there were so many of them in England—that a place where he was told there existed no check, was better conducted than that where there were many. In fact, he saw by these petitions, that a numerous body of persons were complaining that there was money taken out of their pockets which ought not to be taken, and to which they did not assent, and that this money was not applied to the purposes for which it was pretended to be raised, nor applied for their use in any way whatever, what should he say? Most decidedly that there was ground for inquiry.

As to the general observations that were made upon reform, they were easily answered. He knew very well that every reform was, by its enemies, called a subversion; but that ought never to deter others from entering into inquiry; if it were to have that effect, no evils would be prevented, nor any grievance redressed. The complaint here was from the Royal boroughs; that their officers had mismanaged the affairs entrusted to their

care ; that by their mode of election persons were to dispose of the property of those who had not the shadow of a choice at the election, and that the proceedings of those self-elected persons were afterwards carried on in a way that precluded the possibility of any examination into their conduct. Now, if there was to be no inquiry into this, he wished to know what character for freedom the inhabitants of North Britain must have. This was a Crown grievance, and on that account the House ought to be the more ready to enter into an examination of it, and to declare by the Parliament of England, that no such abuses shall be suffered to continue. Let the House peruse the papers, which so much pains had been taken to collect, and let them afterwards declare and proclaim the enormous falsehoods they contained, if that should be the effect of the inquiry.

If the House did not go into this inquiry, they would break their promise with the Public, for they stood pledged by a resolution of last year to enter upon this subject. Let the House publish a resolution, that these grievances do not exist, and that if they did, there are Courts of Law in North Britain to take cognizance of them. He would say that the petitioners had a right to take upon themselves to call on the House of Commons to declare their opinion, whether these grievances do exist or not, and if they do, to call on them to devise means for the redress of them. They had a right to say to the House, for it was true, “ You declared, last year, that you would inquire, and yet this year you insult us, by telling us you will not inquire at all.” He said they had a right to apply to that House as often as they thought fit, and that, in his opinion, they would do well to repeat their application until they gained their point. They were entitled to the protection of the Government of this nation, for it derived the benefit of their allegiance. The House had pledged itself to give an opinion upon the subject of these alledged grievances, and if it withheld that opinion, it would, in his mind, disgrace itself. As to the peace of Scotland, he confessed it appeared to him, that so long as it would be from being in danger from granting this inquiry, that it was the only way effectually to preserve it ; the refusal, indeed, might be dangerous, and be the means of creating some confusion, for men would naturally be led to

excesses after they had repeatedly been refused redress of grievances which they severely felt.

He did not pretend to be equal to a dispute with any Member of that House, much less was he equal to the learned Lord upon the law of Scotland; but by the doctrine maintained by that learned Lord, it seemed to him, as if the inhabitants of North Britain were to be considered as having remedies to grievances, only *de jure*, but which were to be applied *de facto*. But if a Member of the British Parliament was bound to listen to the petitions of any of the people of England, so he was to those of Scotland; and if there was any difference in the degree of zeal with which he was to perform his duty, it was in the case now before the House, where the complaint was, that the people were irregularly taxed; and he confessed freely, he should in his opinion betray his constituents, if he did not give his voice for this inquiry. As to the effect of the inquiry he should not conceal his sentiments, he suspected that there could be no remedy but by altering the mode of election of this self-elected Council. He should be ready to retract that opinion, if he saw good reason for it; but he could not help suspecting that he should remain of the same opinion, because he thought that none should elect others to offices that have the disposal of property, but those who are to pay the taxes. He knew nothing of the character and disposition of the people of North Britain from any other means than from the many excellent characters which he had met with in this country, but he hoped they loved the substance of liberty too well to permit the abuses that had been stated to continue for any considerable length of time. If it were true that their Magistrates imposed upon them in the manner stated, the people must be fallen much below the level of what he thought them, and that they must have feelings of liberty very different from Englishmen; and until he became persuaded that they were so, he should willingly lend every assistance in his power to obtain their just rights, because he knew it to be his duty. He lamented, however, that some gentlemen who were Members of that House were rather indifferent upon the subject, for he believed if these petitions came from other parts of the island, more attention would have been paid. This, however, should not slacken the efforts of these petitioners, but should stimulate them to

persist ; for if they did, the time would come when the House of Commons would be obliged, he did not mean improperly obliged, but obliged by reason, to comply with their request.— When it was said, that there was no peculiar hardship ever felt by the people of North Britain in regard to the management of their burghs, for that many boroughs in England were in the same condition—it called to his mind the pleasing recollection of what was said by a friend of his (Mr. Burke), a person whom he had once the pleasure of calling his friend, who of late had absented himself much from that House, but who had often adorned it with his eloquence, and informed it by his wisdom, although he now was pleased to retire from its debates. His honourable friend, (personally he should still call him so) had made a most excellent observation on a point similar to this, during the debates upon the American taxation : when some had maintained there was no peculiar hardship on the Americans, that the English House of Commons should vote taxes upon them without allowing them the right of representation in Parliament, for that it was the case with Birmingham and Manchester. His honourable friend had said, “ Why do you deal with these people thus? Why do you deal “ out your own defect for their imitation?” To conclude, he was clearly convinced that the House ought, upon all the arguments they had heard, vote this inquiry into their stated grievances, which, if true, no man on earth could justify.

The LORD ADVOCATE explained, and stated, that in the case from Aberdeen, to which he had alluded, the Court of Session had examined into it, and finding the complaint to be ill-founded and unjust, discharged it, which certainly shewed that they thought themselves competent to determine upon such cases.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER said, he considered the subject as having nothing to do with popularity, or unpopularity, and was surprised that popularity had been at all introduced into the debate. He would be content to argue the question upon facts, and to oppose going into any Committee of Inquiry, until the honourable gentleman had produced some facts as grievances, which demanded the inquiry he asked for, and which he insisted his honourable friend had never yet been able

to do. About three years ago his honourable friend had brought in a bill, but as the House knew of no grievances that existed, it was very properly said, produce some facts to substantiate your complaints, and having laid those before us, we shall be able to judge what they amount to, and what remedy, if any is necessary, ought to be applied. Upon this suggestion the bill was then given up, and since that time, a prodigious number of papers had been obtained and laid upon the table; yet after all, they did not contain any one article or instance of grievance, for which redress had been asked and refused; and certainly the House was not bound to go into a Committee of Inquiry upon a mere assertion of grievances, without producing one fact to substantiate the existence of any grievance. If they were, the business of that House would be troublesome indeed. When a complaint was made, and redress really wished for from that House, certainly the person who made the complaint would think it necessary to rest his hopes upon something stronger than general assertion, which in this case was not done; for his honourable friend called for inquiry and remedy, without shewing any one instance of an existing grievance. He insisted that there appeared in the papers on the table no illegal exactions, nor any conduct on the part of Magistracy that required redress. He likewise agreed with the learned Lord, that the Courts in Scotland were competent to inquire into, and adequate to give redress in all cases of illegal abuse. He then noticed the arguments of his right honourable friend, who had said that when one honourable Member insisted that a grievance did exist, and another denied that it did, assertion being answered by assertion, then came the time for inquiry. To this mode of arguing there could be no end, in his opinion; and then, said his right honourable friend, the grievances complained of being so atrocious in their nature, and so incredible, there is still the greater necessity to inquire whether they exist or no—if they do, to apply the proper remedy—and if not, to declare that they are false and unfounded. Now he never could think that the incredibility of any assertion was a strong reason why he ought to believe it. In the same way he might answer what had been said about illegal exactions, for if there were laws against those abuses, there certainly was a remedy for them when committed. He contended, that the *res* re-

pecting the internal government in burghs were pretty similar in England and Scotland ; and that they equally received redress when abuses were committed. He referred to the cases of Aberdeen and Glasgow, and said, that the Courts of Session having entertained those suits, sufficiently evinced their power of taking such complaints under their cognizance. His right honourable friend had whispered to him that the Scotch Court never throw out any action upon their incompetency to judge of it ; but he must say, his right honourable friend had here sadly jostled what Scotch law might be in his head ; for any man who had been in the Court of Session, must know, that actions were thrown out for that very reason. He said, that if in the case alluded to, the Court of Session had improperly decided the complaint to be groundless, the blame lay with the Court and not with the law—whether they had been right or wrong, was not for him to say ; but if they were wrong, the intended bill of his honourable friend could be no remedy against that. As to the grievance of there being no Court to control the management of Magistrates when in office, he admitted it as much as the learned Lord ; and instead of objecting to its being remedied, whenever the honourable gentleman could propose a suitable remedy, he might depend on his support. With regard to there never having been any action for delinquency in Magistrates in Scotland, as stated by the learned Lord, he believed he might add, that the same was the case in England. He then entered into the different ways in which charters were worded, and the opposition that frequently appeared between the words of an original charter and the meaning affixed to it, by the custom or usage of the burgh ; when the words became ambiguous, recourse was had “ to usage, both in England and Scotland, and that certainly “ regulated all determinations respecting the Government of “ those burghs.” His right honourable friend had said, that there was nothing of the characters of freemen left to the inhabitants of Scotch burghs, but he on the other hand contended, that they enjoyed as much as English Burgessees every thing connected with freedom, and that their civil rights were in no ways affected by the present constitution of the burghs. That no Magistrate could levy money from them, or tax them illegally ; and that the laws afforded them address for every possible

abuse in Scotland, as well as in England. His honourable friend had said, he only meant an alteration of the present system by way of improving it; but what did this amount to; why the very first enacting clause of his bill went to a total repeal of all the charters, setts, and instruments of every kind, which regulated the present constitution of the burghs. He said, that if he had agreed with his honourable friend in other respects, he never would agree to abolish one system of corporate rights to establish another; because he believed corporations would be equally creatures of the Crown in whatever shape they appeared. He concluded by noticing that it had been urged, that this was the proper time for calm and temperate reform. He made the highest encomium on the British constitution as it stood; and said, that though he never would oppose necessary reforms, the more he observed what passed out of doors, both at home and abroad, the more he was inclined to prudence and caution in advising alterations in established governments, or calling for reformation on speculative principles.

Mr. MARTIN said, he was happy that he had heard the debate of this night, which he considered of much importance. He was perfectly convinced, by the arguments that had been used, that there was a necessity for inquiry, and would cheerfully give his vote for the honourable gentleman's motion, or any other that could be the object of it.

Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE said, that he formerly mentioned his readiness to go into an inquiry, if any abuses or grievances could be proved. Now as one material grievance had been admitted on all sides, viz. that Magistrates could not be called to account for their management, he certainly would vote for the motion.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, he could not allow the motion to be put without saying a few words, especially as the honourable gentleman seemed to point his attacks particularly at him. Now he would say, that those attacks, and often most severe ones, he had long been accustomed to, but he could assure the honourable gentleman, so little did he regard them, that they never ruffled his temper in the least. He never lost a minute's repose in consequence of them, nor could they disturb him in any way whatever. He must, however,

observe to the House, that the honourable gentleman had totally and completely misrepresented and perverted every thing that he had said before on this question. When the honourable gentleman brought in his bill, he certainly opposed it, as an irregular way of obtaining its pretended object, and he certainly had suggested that it would be proper to put the House in possession of some facts relative to the grievances complained of, before he called upon them to go into an inquiry respecting abuses of which they were entirely ignorant. He was still of the same opinion, and he insisted that his only object, from the moment this subject was introduced into the House till the present, was to have a full and fair discussion, which he had always been, and was at this moment, ready to go into, provided the honourable gentleman would bring forward some specific proposition as a remedy for the abuses stated; and if he did this, he would find him willing to debate the matter with him in any manner he pleased; and he believed he would be able to state the whole of the matter to the satisfaction of the House. A great many papers had certainly been produced, and he supposed they contained all the facts which the honourable gentleman wished to bring forward, and certainly they were sufficient in number, if otherwise well grounded: why, instead of all the delays that had occurred, did not the honourable gentleman come forward at once with his proposition, that, from the facts before them, and the proposed remedy, they might judge whether the first were well founded, or if they were, whether the other was the best remedy to be applied.— But what was there in the honourable gentleman's conduct that looked like sincerity or seriousness in this business? He, last session, brought it forward the very day before Parliament rose, and the House then came to a resolution to take the matter into consideration early in the next session: and how had this been done? The honourable gentleman had heard a rumour that Parliament would rise about the Easter holidays; and after being silent on the subject all the former part of the session, he starts it again on the day immediately before the Easter recess. What he regretted most was, the delusion with which the honourable gentleman had deceived his clients, the Scotch reformers, for several years; and the hopes, equally sanguine and improper, which he had held out to them of accomplish-

ing redress, for supposed and unsubstantiated grievances ; and he would maintain, that granting to them what the honourable gentleman so much called for, a subversion of the present constitutional system of internal government in those burghs, would be the greatest curse that could befall them. He wished, therefore, as soon as possible, to have the matter fairly discussed and settled ; and whenever the honourable gentleman fixed a day for the discussion of the old and constitutional system, in order to introduce a new, speculative, and experimental one, that question would, he trusted, be so argued, as to prevent any farther propositions, or attempts of a similar nature. With regard to his popularity in Scotland, which the honourable gentleman had touched upon, he really did not know well how to answer him on that point, nor did he know or care what effect his opinions on the present question might produce in that way, because he knew he was supporting the true interests of that country, by the line of conduct he had followed. The only time that he had ever had an opportunity of trying his popularity in that country, was when he first became a candidate for a seat in that House ; he then certainly had nothing else to recommend him to a great and respectable county, who elected and returned him to Parliament by a majority of three to one ; and that when his popularity alone was opposed by all the weight and influence of Government ; ever since that period, he had been returned unanimously ; and therefore, notwithstanding the efforts of the honourable gentleman, and his whole band of watchmen, who were attentive to all his motions, he certainly would oppose in the most strenuous manner, an abolition of the old and established constitutional system ; and when contracting the charters with the usage, he would venture to tell the honourable gentleman that he would acquire to himself no great degree of popularity by setting aside the usage of forty years, which had generally been reckoned the best and safest criterion for determining all questions relative to the charters and sets of the Scotch Burghs. In short, his only anxiety was to have the business settled one way or other, either in the House or in a Committee, and not to let it lay over longer, being convinced as he was, that it had in its progress already occasioned much mischief in Scotland ; and that it could not in the end produce any one possible advantage.

Mr. ROLLE said, that his regard for the constitution led him to oppose every motion for reform that had been or could be brought forward ; and as to what the honourable gentleman had concluded his speech with, that this was the proper time for reform and innovation, he must declare that the honourable gentleman had delivered one of the most inflammatory, wicked, and dangerous speeches he had ever heard ; and as long as he had a seat in Parliament, he was determined never to countenance any species of reform whatever, because he knew the constitution of this country was the best and most admirable in the world. With regard to what had been said about the gradual abolition of the slave trade, he had voted for that, and he was happy to think that many petitioners for the total abolition were well satisfied with the step that was taken.

Mr. FOX said, he rose to put the honourable gentleman right in what he had just stated, concerning the slave trade. He had corresponded a good deal on the subject, and would be bold to say, that not one of the petitioners for the immediate abolition of the slave trade, were at all satisfied with the idea of a gradual abolition.

Mr. ROLLE explained, and said that several of his constituents who petitioned for the immediate, now approved of the gradual, abolition.

Mr. SHERIDAN hoped the House would grant him the indulgence usually granted to the mover of a question—that of making a short reply to the several arguments urged against it. To the honourable gentleman who with so much knowledge of the rules and language of debate, had declared his former speech to be inflammatory and wicked, he begged leave to make use of a right honourable gentleman's words as addressed to himself, and to assure the honourable gentleman, that nothing he could say should either ruffle his temper, or disturb his tranquillity of mind. The honourable gentleman who was so zealous an admirer of the constitution, was content to admire it upon trust, without examining its principles, or comparing its excellencies with its defects—and in this he acted wisely, for to do the one required only confidence in the commendations bestowed by others ; but to do the other required knowledge and understanding. If the honourable gentleman had observed

the same discretion with respect to his speech, he would have saved himself the trouble of applying terms to it which it did not deserve. Had he waited to form an opinion on trust from the opinions of others, he would have thought it neither inflammatory nor wicked, for he would venture to assert, that there was not another gentleman in the House who had formed such an opinion. He had no wish to break the rest of the right honourable gentleman, or to make his meals uncomfortable ; for of all the Members of Administration, the right honourable gentleman, by his open and manly way of doing things, whether right or wrong, had conciliated his good opinion the most. He could therefore have no intention of making him uneasy, and rejoiced to have the right honourable gentleman's own word for it that he had not. Notwithstanding the composure with which the right honourable gentleman began, he had soon forgotten that he was not to be angry, and expressed himself in tones that did not indicate quite so much calmness as he professed. If that was the consequence of any thing he had said, it was not the object. The object was to prevail on the right honourable gentleman to agree to go into the Committee for which he had moved, and in that he had succeeded ; for he now understood that the right honourable gentleman did agree.—[Mr. Dundas said across the table, No ! No !]—To what, then, said Mr. Sheridan, did the right honourable gentleman agree ? for I appeal to the recollection of the House, whether his words did not clearly imply his assent to a Committee.—[Mr. Pitt whispered Mr. Dundas.]—I wish, said Mr. Sheridan, the right honourable gentleman may not be prompted. I should be glad that he had no watchmen set over him on this occasion but mine.—[Mr. Dundas said, he had not consented to a Committee of Inquiry.]—Mr. Sheridan proceeded. He was at a loss where to find the right honourable gentleman's meaning. He had formerly brought in a bill, on the presumption that the abuses it meant to remedy did exist, with a view that those who thought they did not, might have an opportunity of proving in the Committee on the bill that it was unnecessary, if they had the means of doing so. He was then told by the right honourable gentleman, that his mode of proceeding was irregular ; that he began where he ought to end ; and that the proper course would be, first to call for evi-

dence to prove the existence of the grievance, and then propose his remedy. He had adopted the suggestion, and now that the evidence was on the table, and he was ready to prove that the grievances did exist, he was denied the proper parliamentary means, and called upon to bring forward the remedy he proposed. He was not unprepared upon that subject ; but as he knew that few gentlemen, perhaps not the right honourable gentleman himself, had examined, or even perused the evidence on the table, he felt the difficulty of calling upon them to vote resolutions on documents which they had not read. If gentlemen compelled him to proceed in this manner, it was impossible to believe they were serious, or that they did not wish to get rid of an investigation which they were afraid to meet.— The right honourable gentleman had affected to say, that he was not sincere in his prosecution of this business. The right honourable gentleman had, doubtless, been too attentive to the consistency of his own political conduct, to attend much to that of so humble an individual as himself, and this must be his excuse for an assertion which he could not support by a single fact. He called upon the right honourable gentleman to mention a time in which he had not been as zealous an advocate for the rights of the people as he professed to be at present. That those rights were sacred, and that reform was necessary wherever they were violated, were the first political principles he had adopted. With those principles he had come into Parliament, with those principles he had connected himself with men who merited his confidence and the confidence of their country. If the right honourable gentleman supposed that he had abandoned those principles, that he was under any party influence or private obligation, that withheld him from acting upon them, he desired once for all to tell him, that he was grossly misinformed. The right honourable gentleman talked of his own popularity in Scotland ; that he had stood candidate for a county, and carried his election against all the influence of Government by more than three to one ; with much more implied by his manner, which his natural modesty would not allow him to express by words. But then came the conclusion—all this was before he was tried as a political man ; and from that time to the present he had taken care to have the influence of Government in his favour. To this popularity he

would advise him not to trust with too much confidence, any more than to the boasted apathy of his temper. He admitted that the right honourable gentleman would not wince for trifles—as Montesquieu said, you must slay a Muscovite to make him feel—and the right honourable gentleman had sometimes shewn that even his insensibility was not impregnable. It was impossible to proceed with any degree of regularity or effect, but in a Committee. As soon as that was granted, he would move certain propositions arising out of the evidence, the particular points of which he should select, and every Member would have an opportunity of examining and controverting them, which could not be done so fully in any other mode. To this it was objected, that admitting the abuses, the remedy which he proposed, instead of being a benefit, instead of encouraging a liberal spirit of industry, and promoting the prosperity of the burghs, would introduce misery and confusion; and in support of this argument, they who adduced it stumbled on Paisley, as an instance of increasing wealth under the old system. Now, it so happened, that Paisley was not under that system, nor had any such grievances to check its industry as those complained of by the petitioners. It was, therefore, an instance to his purpose, not to theirs, and gave reason to presume, that the decay and poverty of various other places, were owing to the abuses of their internal government. Neither was his wish to alter the mode of electing the Councils, which to him seemed the only effectual remedy, a well-founded objection. When the House was satisfied that there were abuses to correct, it would then be as open to them to adopt that remedy which to their wisdom should seem the best, as if he had never proposed any remedy at all. It was now admitted, that the burghers at large had no means of control over the expenditure of their money; that they had not even access to the accounts kept by the Council, and could not apply to any tribunal to compel the production of them. Was not this a flagrant and scandalous grievance? Was it not as incredible as any he had stated?—And yet for this no remedy had ever been proposed. He should prove also, if allowed the means, that more was raised under the head of Cess than was paid to Government. Some of the accounts on the table shewed a considerable difference between the assessments and the payments; and although the balance

might have been honestly disposed, the circumstance was a presumption of malversation, and a sufficient ground for inquiry. When the learned Lord mentioned the cases in which he had been employed as an advocate, he believed he had forgotten that one of them was a case of dues of another kind. His declaration on these occasions was, doubtless, worthy of higher praise than it would have been becoming for the learned Lord to bestow ; but he feared it might have been the occasion of the cause's being lost ; and had he been the client, he should have begged the learned Lord to spare his declamation, and stick as closely as possible to the facts and law. But what was the nature of this remedy, admitting it to exist ? Every poor man, every industrious manufacturer, whose daily labour was barely sufficient to maintain his wife and family, was to proceed by a separate action. If he conceived that he was overcharged, he must pay his money in the first instance, and then leave his home to apply to some tribunal, or pay for the declamation of an Advocate to get it back. In this pursuit he would have the satisfaction of knowing that he must pay all his own expences, and contribute his share to the expence of the defence ; for it was the invariable rule, that the Magistrates defended all suits against them out of the public purse, and levied money accordingly. This was the miserable remedy held out to the poor and industrious, on whom such overcharges were likely to fall the heaviest, even by those who affirmed that a remedy did exist. Could any man imagine that it ever was effectual ? Yet even this remedy they had not in fact ; for as they had not access to the accounts, supposed to be kept by the Magistrates, and as the cess was blended with other dues, they had no means of discovering, much less of proving, that overcharges were made. There was proof also of abuse in the alienation of property.— They who denied this, admitted that they knew of no case in which redress had been obtained, although they said there was a remedy ; and the reason was the same as in the other abuses—there was no means of coming at the accounts. It was only since the papers had been called for by the House that the private deposits of the Councils had been unlocked, and some of the abuses, of which they contained the proofs, brought to light. His honourable friend (Mr. Anstruther) had said, that the charters were worded in terms which time had rendered

obscure, and that usage, in all cases, was held to be the best explanation. He affirmed, that all the charters on the table, without exception, gave, in clear and express terms, the rights of electing the Magistrates to the Burgesses, and not to the Magistrates to elect their successors. The act of 1649, which made sets of the burghs what they now were, expressly admitted the clear interpretation of the charters, and like all acts for depriving men of their right of franchise, assigned reasons for doing so; and among others, recited the abuses and inconveniencies of popular elections; as those who disliked that mode did now. If the House of Commons, when they passed the septennial bill, which they had as much right to do, as to pass an act creating them all Dukes, Marquisses, and Earls, had passed a bill reciting all the real and supposed abuses of popular election, that therefore it was fit to put an end to such elections, and enacting that the Members of that and each succeeding House, should elect their own successors, what security would the people have had either that no more money should be levied on them in taxes than was necessary, or that they should have a fair account of its application? Were such a proposition to be now made, what would be the opinion of his honourable friend? He knew too well the integrity of his heart, and the rectitude of his understanding, not to be assured that he would meet it with indignant opposition? Yet the situation of the people of Great Britain would then be no worse than that of the burghers of Scotland, under the present system of self-elected Councils. It was easy to lavish praises on the Constitution, but it became the House of Commons to praise it not by their words but their actions; to endeavour to extend the spirit and the principles of it to all the inferior constitutions under its protection. It mattered little to tell him, that there were similar abuses in English boroughs. It was a poor satisfaction to the petitioner from Scotland to be told that his English fellow-subject endured the same grievance. There might, for any thing he knew to the contrary, be more to reform in England than in Scotland; while those who felt the grievance did not complain, while they did not petition for redress, it was not his business to move such reforms. But when they did complain, when they did apply in an orderly and constitutional manner for redress, whether from Scotland or England,

they were entitled to every degree of attention that Parliament could bestow. The power of electing their own Magistrates, he was convinced, would do more to correct abuses than any other remedy that could be devised. Magistrates so elected, it was said, might be as arbitrary in levying money, and as profuse in spending it, as the present. If they were, the people would have a speedy remedy; they might turn out those Magistrates, chuse honest men, and call the defaulters to account. Abuse might be accidental, but could not be systematic. The effect of this remedy would even be to turn out the opulent burghers and let in the poor. He did not like it the better on this account; but as matters stood, it would do just the reverse; for the persons in possession of the corporations on the present system were in general the meanest. In proof of this, he read over the names of the Council of Pittenweem, with the quality of each—colliers, tailors, weavers, &c., and asked if those were men more respectable than were likely to be chosen by a popular election.

An honourable Baronet (Sir J. Johnstone) had candidly said, that an abuse being admitted to exist, he would vote for a Committee. The honourable Baronet, in a public letter, had formerly said, that considering himself as trustee for the Councils of the burghs whom he represented, he should think it as nefarious in him to do any thing to abridge or abolish their privileges. This was, no doubt, the feeling of many other gentlemen. They considered themselves not as the representatives of the people, but of the Councils of the burghs, by whom they were elected, which accounted for the little support he received from the gentlemen from Scotland; and there was reason to suppose, that the same corporation spirit operated on many of the representatives of English boroughs. There was no need to fear but that if the Committee was granted, the Scots burghs would meet with all the support to which they were entitled. There was no such thing as popular election in Scotland. The people there had no political weight. If the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) would turn his

attention to this point, if he would give them the political weight which the people in all free governments ought to possess, he would bind them more strongly to their native soil, he would attach them more firmly to the constitution, than by empty praises which they could not feel, because they had little among them to which they could refer. The redress for which he moved should not be got rid of by any dexterity of management on the present occasion, nor any direct refusal to inquire. It was in its nature such as must and should be granted. He begged pardon for the expression, but when he knew that the petitioners were resolved to persevere, deeply impressed as he was with the justice of their claim, it was not too much presumption to say that in a time of increasing reason and declining prejudice, the cause of truth must gain by every discussion, until it was finally carried.

Sir JAMES SINCLAIR ERSKINE said, that if gentlemen had not read the evidence, he did not see that they would be more competent to decide upon it in a Committee than they were then. Did the honourable gentleman mean to read over all the papers for their information? He observed that the principle laid down for altering the constitution of the Scotch burghs would go to the alteration of all similar constitutions in England, a principle which, he apprehended, gentlemen were not prepared to adopt. He went over the general arguments against the reform, and contended that the abuses alledged did not exist.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, the motion was neither such as ought to be negatived nor passed. The honourable gentleman might move his proposition of reform, and then the House might go into a Committee to consider of it, if that should seem proper. He therefore recommended to withdraw the motion, and take the other course. If the motion was persisted in, he should move to adjourn.

Mr. SHERIDAN recapitulated his reasons for proceeding as he had done. If he was allowed to go into a Committee he had gained his end, and would withdraw his present motion. In that Committee he should move proposi-

tions of fact founded on the evidence, and on these propositions, when reported and agreed to by the House, he should move his remedy.

Mr. DUNDAS asked if the alteration of the present setts of the burghs was not his object.

Mr. SHERIDAN said his object was first to establish the facts, which, he trusted, the evidence would establish, and then to propose a bill founded on those facts.

Mr. DUNDAS again objected, that to propose an alteration of the setts of the burghs was the avowed object of going into a Committee.

Mr. FOX said, it was of the utmost importance to ascertain the grievance before any remedy was proposed; and however uncandid it might seem, if the inquiry to that effect was defeated by any management, he should think that the grievances were known to exist, and that examination was stopped merely to suppress the truth. The mode proposed by his honourable friend was warranted by the constant usage of the House; and was, indeed, the only one fit to be followed where inquiry was seriously meant.

Mr. DUNDAS repeated, that to go into the inquiry at large was only to admit a presumption that grievances did exist of which they had yet no proof, and to give occasion to expectations that could not be gratified.

Mr. SHERIDAN again said, it was impossible for any proposition of his, in the shape of a remedy, to be argued fairly till it was shewn that there was a grievance that called for it.

Mr. Chancellor FITT asked if the honourable gentleman meant to withdraw his motion.

Mr. SHERIDAN withdrew his motion, and then moved,

“ That the several petitions, papers, and accounts, presented to the House in the last Parliament, relative to the internal government of the Royal burghs of Scotland, be referred to the consideration of a Committee.”

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, this was the same motion on which the House had been debating irregularly before, and

the same in substance with that which was negatived before the holidays. The materials for judging were on the table, and if gentlemen thought that they contained no grounds for the remedy intimated by the honourable gentleman, they would do right in voting against going into the Committee.

Mr. FOX, with great force and warmth, exposed the absurdity of refusing to inquire into the grievance, because they might not approve of the remedy suggested by any particular Member; and repeated, that if the questions were not kept separate, if the denial of the grievance was shuffled into the debate on the remedy, he should think those who insisted on that mode of proceeding were convinced of the grievance, and afraid to meet inquiry. All petitioners, who came to that House with proof of a grievance, had a right to redress, much more had they a right to a candid hearing: to refuse the former was an injury, but to deny the latter an insult.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, the practical rule was, for any gentleman who proposed an inquiry to explain what he meant to move as the result; and if the House disapproved of the latter, they would not waste time unnecessarily on the former. The honourable gentleman's general allegation was, that the abuses of which he complained arose from the mode of election. This he had not proved in any part of his argument, and the House would not give room to suppose that radical defects were believed to exist in the constitution of the Scots Burghs, without proof, nor excite hopes that could end only in disappointment and delusion.

The House divided on the motion for referring the papers, &c. to a Committee.

Ayes, 27; Noes, 69.

Mr. SHERIDAN, in strong terms, expressed his surprise at this decision, and said the business should not be so dismissed. The petitioners were determined to persevere, and while that was the case, he would persist in bringing it forward from day to day, and from session to session, under

the persuasion that the House would be their counsel—that they had only to adduce their proofs—they had not desired leave to substantiate their case by counsel at the bar. This they might now feel to be a proper step; he should consult them upon it to-morrow, and give an early notice of a motion for admitting them to be heard by Counsel, or of bringing forward their complaint in some other shape.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 19th April.

There not being a sufficient number of Members to form a ballot for an election Committee, the House adjourned.

Friday, 20th April.

Mr. TAYLOR gave notice, that on Friday next it was his intention to move for a Committee of Inquiry into the evils arising from lotteries.

The House adjourned.

Monday, 23d April.

Mr. DUNDAS moved, “ That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the circumstances of the African slave trade, agreeably to the order of the day.” The House resolved accordingly, and Mr. Beaufoy took the chair.

Mr. DUNDAS then rose to perform his promise, namely, to submit his ideas on the slave trade. He said, that he should not take notice of any advantage which the slave trade might be of to this country, or to any class of inhabitants in it, or to any of the planters in the West Indies, if the trade had been permitted to continue: these were points totally extraneous, because the House had expressed its sense that the trade should not be continued. He should not say any thing either on the immediate abolition, because the House had come to a resolution, that the trade should only be gradually abolished; his sentiments, therefore, must naturally be applicable only to the idea of a gra-

dual abolition of the slave trade, and it was in that view he wished to submit them to the sense of the Committee.

Several years ago, he said, he had formed his opinion upon the propriety and justice of the abolition of that trade, and the report of the evidence before the Committee of Privy Council had confirmed him in that opinion; but though he thought it ought not be continued, he did not think it would be safe suddenly to put an end to it. Some gentlemen, he observed, were for the immediate abolition, and others considered an abolition in any way whatever as prejudicial and ruinous to our islands, and to all concerned with them: his ideas therefore, which he would now state for the gradual abolition of the trade, might be rejected by both those descriptions of persons, but he hoped they would be discussed candidly, and, if rejected, rejected after fair argument. The Committee had already come to a resolution on the subject, which was, "that the trade should be gradually abolished;" that resolution he considered as the only basis for reasoning on the subject: and he expected that those who had differed from him on the former night would consider themselves bound by the resolution to regard the trade as a condemned trade. But he sincerely hoped, that should his propositions not be adopted, it was not the idea that they were that day met to vote an immediate abolition, because if that was the idea, it would lay them under the necessity of reverting back again to the original question. He begged leave before he entered into the detail to state again and again what he had advanced on a former night, viz. that he considered the co operation of the West-India merchants and planters essential to the abolition; for unless they made them parties in the experiment they were about to make, that experiment could never be made; upon that ground he hoped that those gentlemen who were advocates for the abolition would see the impropriety of looking to a very short period; if they did not, the trade would be continued in a different mode and through other channels; if time was not given to encourage the merchants and planters to try fairly the scheme of rearing a sufficient number of

native negroes to answer the purpose of cultivating the plantations, the trade would be carried on by foreign countries, and by our capitals and be an unregulated African trade; for that House would cease to have the power of regulating it: he therefore begged gentlemen for the sake of their own feelings and opinions, for the sake of the humanity, that he believed, and sincerely believed they felt, not to insist upon too short a period. Having said this in general to those who were the most eager for the abolition of the slave trade, he would address himself next to another description of persons; the West India planters and merchants themselves; and to them he would say that they were by no means aiding their cause if they insisted on too long a period to complete the abolition of this trade, because the minds of a great number of persons in this country, and those of the greatest talents and influence in it, were made up, and the sense of the House had, in some degree, been already expressed upon the subject, and the question might be said to be in part decided; and under this view he would recommend a little mutual concession on the subject. There was another class of men, whose interests and opinions should not be neglected; for if they were, there would ensue very great distress to many, and total ruin to some families. The persons to whom he alluded were those who were mortgagees, annuitants, or trustees for the estates of infants having property in the West Indies. Supposing for a moment, for the sake of argument, that the planters could carry on their plantations without fresh importations of negroes, and that they even thought so themselves, that would not be sufficient to remove the evil, for those planters' interest was much involved in the interest and the opinion of these mortgagees, trustees, &c. These persons must be satisfied that the plan was eligible, and that it would not affect their property, else they would make great haste to change the nature of their security, and call in their property for the purpose of investing it some where else, and by these means occasion losses and bankruptcies to an extent that would appear incredible i were now stated. The result was, that Parli-

ament would act unwisely, if it did not attend minutely and reflect on these points. Such would be the effect of taking too short a period for the abolition of the trade; there were other evils which would be the effect of making that period too long. There was another body of men whose interests were involved in this traffic. The persons engaged in the trade itself, owners of vessels belonging to the ports of London, Liverpool and Bristol; and whatever feeling some might entertain for them, still it was undoubtedly true that they had been in the custom of following up this trade, under an idea that it was sanctioned by the Legislature of this country; under such impressions the Committee would feel that as it was in their power, so it was their duty to do them justice. Upon this topic he should not enlarge now, but should have something to suggest hereafter. Having stated the general outlines of the effect of what appeared to him to be the best plan that could be adopted to meet the interest of all parties, and also to effectuate the abolition of the trade, he should now come to mention some of the particulars of the system which he should propose for the purposes of this abolition.

First, That that part which was carried on not for the immediate use of our own islands, but for the service of foreign nations, he should propose to be immediately abolished. This made a very material part of the traffic; for in the year 1791, the whole importation consisted of seventy-four thousand, not less than thirty-four thousand of which were exported for the service of foreign nations. This part of the trade it was his object to suppress directly on the commencement of his plan; and this made a very substantial and material part of the slave trade. Another part of his plan was to cut off as much as he could the importation of aged people to the West Indies from the Coast of Africa. The reason why he formed that plan he should shortly mention. In the first place, a limitation upon the age would lead to lessen the number, because the importation of young persons would tend more to population than that of persons of an advanced age, and the leading principle of his

plan was to enable the planters to make an experiment, how far they could, by any means, render fresh importation of slaves into the plantations unnecessary. In this the age, in his opinion, was much to be attended to. Another reason why he wished to direct the attention of the Committee to this part of the subject was, that it would in a great degree lessen the cruelties that were said to be practised on these unhappy people in their own countries, previous to the sale of them. Another reason why he adopted this was, that by importing young negroes, we protected ourselves in a great measure against the diseases of these unfortunate persons; for the diseases to which they were chiefly incident were much more common among the aged than the young. The aged often brought diseases with them from Africa, which soon proved mortal to themselves, and often affected those with whom they associated. It was well known, Mr. Dundas said, that most of the calamities of the Middle Passage were owing to the diseases of the old negroes. Another advantage arising from this regulation would be, that it would likewise remove the complaints of the heartbreaking feelings, of the slaves of age being torn from their connections and ancient habits; as the negroes, of the age he should wish to confine the importation to, could not be supposed to have made connections, or entertained habits from which they would not soon have their minds weaned. He had another very strong reason for being desirous of importing young instead of old negroes, which was, that it might be rendered worth the care of the planters to inculcate into the minds of the young negroes that religious and moral instruction which they might be capable of receiving, and which probably was never considered an object worthy of attention with respect to the ancient negroes: he was convinced that every idea of civilizing the negroes in Africa, or in our islands, would prove totally futile and chimerical until an institution were established for the purpose of instructing them in religious and moral duties; and such institutions, he said, he should take care to suggest.

Under these impressions, he had thought of confining the whole of our importation of negroes to females not exceeding the age of sixteen, and to males not exceeding the age of twenty; these were his own notions upon the subject, and all his ideas had been directed to that object. But certain suggestions had been made to him that this plan could not be carried into execution. It was said that it would be impossible to obtain a sufficient number for the purposes of carrying on our plantations under this limitation. He had yielded to these suggestions, and had in consequence adopted another plan, which was, that the importation should be confined to females of the age of twenty, and males of the age of twenty-five. This he adopted not from his own original sentiments, but from the suggestion of others much better qualified to form a just opinion on the subject. Another reason he had for wishing the negroes imported to be young, and which he ought, he said, to have given before, was, that as it was natural that persons taken by force from their native place should be discontented, the younger they were, the less would be that discontent; and by avoiding the importation of aged persons, we avoided much insecurity, tumult, and insurrection, and most of the evils which threatened the safety of our West-India islands. In his proposition therefore for confining the importation to young negroes he had in view the preventing the importation of African convicts, for it was idle to complain of the uncivilized and mischievous habits of the negroes, when it was acknowledged that those convicted of crimes in their own country were imported into the islands, who brought with them the seeds of wickedness, the seeds of sedition, the seeds of insurrection, and the seeds of every possible vice. By thus limiting age and tonnage, he said, he should confine the importation to that class of negroes who were stated to be bred on the coast by their masters for the purpose of being sold for slaves; but a difficulty had also been stated to him that forenoon upon this part of his plan, which was, that the slaves so reared, were not suffered to

be exported, unless convicted of crimes; should therefore the resolution he should suggest on this point appear, on inquiry, to be attended with inconveniences and danger, he begged leave to enter his caveat, and should not consider himself as tied down to proceed with it. Mr. Dundas next adverted to the risque the African merchants would be exposed to, of suffering in their capital, which chiefly consisted in the property of their ships, by the abolition, and therefore it became a matter of consideration, what sort of indemnification was proper for the loss to be sustained by the African merchants. Were their ships fit for that trade only, and incapable of being used in other sorts of commerce? He said, he should certainly think it his duty to propose that commissioners be appointed to inquire into the losses which might be so sustained, and quoted as a precedent, the Committee appointed by the regulating act.

The next point was, the period to be declared for the final abolition of the trade. Upon this point there had been a great difference of opinion. It was a difference naturally to be expected, and he had met with it. This point would be governed in a great measure by the calculation to be formed of the increase and decrease of population in the various parts at which negroes were imported, and upon the proportion of males and females, and what, in technical terms, were called men boys and women girls. This strengthened his first observation—that none but those who were young should be imported; and then came the question at what time the importation should cease, and upon that point he confessed he had not the least hope he should be able to give satisfaction. He had made it his business to see every person whom he thought capable of affording him information, and he had endeavoured to extract from each and all of them an opinion. The farthest point to which he could get the friends to the abolition to go, was the term of five years; they would not talk to him if he proposed a farther period. The lowest point the anti-abolitionists would come to was a

period of ten years. His own judgement led him to fall in with the longer period, because he thought that if he was successful in the plan that he should propose, that a shorter period than either would cure the evil, and at the same time quiet the minds of planters, and other persons more immediately interested in the trade; but as he wished nothing so much as that this subject should be set at rest for ever; and as he deprecated the uncertainty and danger of its remaining undecided, he wished to give way to the opinion of others upon this subject. He should therefore propose a period of 8 years ending in the year 1800 when the trade should finally cease. He was sure it was the interest of this country, and he believed it to be the unanimous sense of mankind, that this question should not be kept much longer in a state of suspense. He was happy, however, in having an opportunity of declaring that hitherto the discussion of the subject had not been attended with any mischievous consequences, and that our possessions, where this traffic was applicable, were at present in a quiet state. But although this was the case at this moment, who could be sure that it would continue to be so. Hence the propriety of coming to a determination that might set the point at rest. As to St. Domingo, he confessed that all that had been said of the insurrections of that place, and of its being the effect of our having had this subject agitated here, was totally without foundation—it originated in another cause. But of all things on earth he thought the question ought not to be continued undecided; for though he wished not to be considered as a prophet, he could not avoid saying, that if the discussion should, by the length of time it occupied here, land on the coasts of our islands, the calamity might be dreadful.

Upon the period, however, at which the importation of negroes to our colonies and plantations was to cease, he must now submit his sentiments. He had thought of the subject a good deal—of the public mind upon it—of the necessity of attending to that consideration—of the in-

terest also of the planters and other persons concerned and interested in the trade; and he must confess that he did not see how he could limit them to less than seven years from the 1st of May, 1793. This was general with regard to the islands and plantations. With regard to the ceded islands, it must be allowed they stood in a very different predicament. It would be recollected they came to us in the year 1763. They were restored to us after recapture; but the history of them he would not detail; the Committee would recollect their situation. That encouragement was held out for persons to lay out large sums of money upon grants upon these islands, which at this time changed the nature of property on them, and made them very different from the other islands, and therefore some farther consideration should be given to them. Perhaps, some might be of opinion that a farther continuance of the trade should be allowed to them—or, perhaps, an indemnification of another sort, but these were points to be considered hereafter. To come more immediately to the subject—namely, the necessity of supplying the islands with a fresh importation of negroes, he would say that it was not intended that the trade should be extended during this interval of proposed gradual abolition; for that there were no thoughts entertained of increasing the cultivation of the islands, and that his object only was that there shall be a stock kept up on the islands, so that the present cultivation of them should not be lessened; and for this purpose, as well as for some others, at which he had hinted, perhaps it might be proper to name commissioners to examine into the nature of the grants, &c. by which they were affected at present, and to see how far any claims could be made upon the justice of this country for any compensation for eventual losses. The real state of the question upon the point of population as far as regards the islands, was different in different islands, but all of them differed from the state of Jamaica.

He now begged to draw the attention of the Committee to the situation of our West-India islands, in respect to their population: for this purpose, he read a statement of the imports and exports for the years 1789, 1790, and 1791, by which it first appeared, that there had been imported into Antigua, in the year 1789, 311; exported 140; retained 271; which, as far as regarded that island, it undoubtedly appeared that they had nearly arrived to a sufficient state of population, not to be endangered by the abolition; in the year 1790, they neither imported or exported a single slave, but in the year 1791, a year of general importation, they imported 268, and exported none. In Barbadoes, in 1789, there were imported 444; exported 399; retained 45: in 1790, imported 126; exported 72; retained 54: in 1791, imported 382; exported 100; retained 282: in Montserrat, in 1789, none were imported; eight exported: in the years 1790 and 1791, no slaves imported or exported: in Nevis, during the last three years, no slaves imported or exported.— In St. Kitt's, in 1789, imported 67; exported 332; in 1790, 85 were imported, and the whole retained: and in 1791, no slaves were imported or exported. In Tortola, in 1791, there were 44 exported, but none imported; and in the two preceding years there was neither exportation or importation. In the Bahamas, in 1789, neither importation or exportation: in 1790, an exportation of 55: in 1791, an importation of 212, the whole of which was retained. Those islands might be considered, therefore, so far advanced in population, as to be free from any danger arising from the abolition: but the case was different with respect to Jamaica; for, in the year 1789, the importation was 9808; the exportation 2030; retained 7868. In 1790, there were imported 14,063; exported 1970, and 12930 retained. In 1791, 15,000 imported; 3082 exported, and 12,388 retained; which proved that that island was not arrived at such a state of population, that they could safely rest upon it. Mr. Dundas next stated the importations and exportations of the ceded islands, of Grenada, St. Dominica, and St. Vincent's, in all of which the importations had greatly exceeded the exportation. Dominica, in 1791, imported and retained 440.

Grenada, in 1789, imported 6490; exported 3040, retained 3050; in 1792, 3900; exported 3142: retained 768: in 1791, imported 9283; exported 6000; retained 2921. St. Vincent's, in 1789, imported 938; exported 58; retained 845: in 1790, imported 1552; exported 611; retained 2941: in 1791, imported 2863; exported 1346, and retained 1617. Having made the statements, to prove the policy of gradually abolishing the trade, instead of an immediate abolition.

Arguments, he was aware, might, in consequence of these statements, be adduced on both sides. On the one hand it might be said, that unless importation be perpetually allowed, trade cannot be carried on, and consequently the island must be ruined. On the other, that the importations have been so great lately, that there will never be any farther necessity for importation, particularly as the mortality is not so great as it has been, and must still be less, if the health and morals of the negroes be properly attended to.— Upon these points, he would say nothing more, than that we must give room for the planters to make experiments, to see how far they can succeed in any plan for the increase of the population of the negroes. Above all, we were not to forget that much of the prosperity of this island depended on the opinion which the mortgagees, trustees, &c. entertained of the plan by which it was managed; and therefore, that due regard should be had to the disposition of these persons. He then entered on the state of the ceded islands, and distinguished what appeared to him to constitute the difference between them and the other islands; observing, that the whole plan, as far as is applied to them, should be brought forward in a distinct and separate resolution for that purpose. He observed also, that he should propose additional regulations for the punishment of outrages that might be committed in this trade, as well as that there should not be a greater number of males than females in any future importation—a point that had not hitherto been sufficiently attended to, but which he should hereafter bring forward. With regard to the West-India planters, he must be permitted to say, he thought they and the Colonial Assemblies had been very harshly treated. It had been said, that they had not attended to the object of me-

liorating the condition of the slaves in the West Indies. The fact was, they had been very attentive to that object, and had in a great degree been successful; and he believed that the attention to the interest of those poor creatures had been very great by the planters and Colonial Assembly, and that as much favour had been shewn to them as was compatible with the condition of slaves. It was true that many sanguinary laws with regard to slaves remained unrepealed until the year 1789. But was there any evidence that those sanguinary laws were executed according to their rigour?—None. The contrary was notorious. As well, then, might we say, that all the sanguinary laws against Catholics were enforced, because they were not repealed until the last session. He hoped that many of these points would be farther attended to in consequence of the discussions of that subject in Parliament. He thought the negroes might be allowed to reap a certain proportion of the fruits of their own industry. He said, the chief grievances they suffered was from being a transferrable people, in consequence of which, they were liable to be sold from a good master, and carried into another island to a worse; and he wished to introduce rather a prædial than a personal service. Another point, to which he begged leave to call the attention of the Committee, was a system of moral duty and religion. He hoped that in future care would be taken to instruct these negroes in the principles of the Christian religion—a religion which we had embraced, and without inculcating which among the slaves, we should make nothing of our abolition—a religion, which, whatever might be said on some of the controversial doctrines maintained by many of its professors, contained a system of morality that fitted its believer for all the duties of social life, and tended to make him a better man and a better citizen. If they did not teach these ignorant people the principles of this religion, and the planters complained that they were disturbed by the slaves, who would not obey the orders of their masters, they had no right to complain. As well might the husbandman complain of a bad harvest, after he had neglected to cultivate the soil of his farm, as the planter complain of the morals of these poor people, whom he had neglected to instruct. In-

deed there was much reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the clergy in these plantations; considerable regulations were wanted, and should be adopted in that respect.

The planters had complained, that the Clergy in the islands were of no service; but this complaint he had no doubt the venerable Prelate the Bishop of London, in whose diocese it was, would endeavour to remedy. To the establishment of institutions for instruction of young negroes, he was confident the Colonial Assemblies would concur; and in order to provide for the expence of their establishment he should propose an humble address to His Majesty; but not on this subject alone: It had been said that if we should give up the trade, it would be carried on by other powers; if the House wished, however, as he was convinced it did wish, radically to abolish the slave trade, they would see the necessity of their endeavouring to induce every power in Europe to abandon it, as the West Indians might fear being outrivalled in trade, if the importation of Africans was not stopped by other countries: for which reason his proposed address would likewise go to beseech His Majesty to use such measures which he in his wisdom might think fit, by negotiation, or otherwise, to bring about a concert of the powers of Europe for the abolition of the slave trade. Mr. Dundas said, he saw no reason to think because the slave trade ceased our commerce with the continent of Africa was to cease likewise. Out of the ashes of the slave trade new trades would arise, which by the exchange of our manufactures for the produce of Africa would tend to civilize the natives of that part of the globe, and introduce among them the light of reason. There were, he said, daily symptoms of the establishment of a commercial intercourse with Africa being at no very distant period, and he hoped it would engage the attention of Administration, since the civilization of the Africans and the increase of our commerce with them, would go hand in hand, and he hoped this country, which had given encouragement to the slave trade, would give encouragement to establishments and to societies that might tend to open and extend a trade to Africa more beneficial and

more honourable. Without pretending to possess either the eloquence or talents of some honourable gentlemen, even with his moderate abilities, he thought he could propose some plans that would promise success, and in some measure effect the desired object. After more observations he would barely read over his resolutions, and for the convenience of the House he would have them printed, and reserve the discussion to Wednesday next. Before he sat down, he said, whether his ideas were right or not, he trusted that it would be recollected, that he had at least done justice to himself in fulfilling his pledge, that he had fairly marched up to his proposition, and that he had brought forward nothing nugatory, but that he could not say he had, to his own satisfaction, gone so deeply into the subject as he could have wished; the shortness of time, and the great number of volumes he had found it necessary to refer to, must plead his excuse, nor had he it in his power to boast, that he had no other laborious avocations and duties to attend to in the mean time. Mr. Dundas concluded with reading over the following resolutions :

“ 1. THAT it shall not be lawful to import any African negroes into any British colonies, or plantations, in ships owned, or navigated, by British subjects, at any time after the 1st day of January, 1800.

“ 2. That from and after the first day of May 1793, it shall not be lawful to carry any African negro from the coast of Africa, or any African, or Creole negro, from any of His Majesty's islands or plantations in the West Indies, to any of the dominions of any foreign Power, in any ship owned or navigated by British subjects; or in any foreign ship or vessel that may depart from the ports of Kingston, Montego Bay, St. Lucia, and Savannah la Mar, in the island of Jamaica; or from the ports of St. George, in the island of Grenada, Nassau in the island of Dominica, and Nassau in the island of New Providence, in the Bahamas.

“ 3. That from and after the first day of May, in the present year, it shall not be lawful for any ships to clear out from any port of Great Britain, for the coast of Africa, for the

purpose of taking on board negroes, unless such ships shall have been previously employed in the African trade, or contracted for, for that purpose, previous to the said first day of May.

“ And farther, it shall not be lawful for any ship to clear out from any British colony or plantation in America, for the coast of Africa, for the purpose of taking on board negroes, unless such ship shall have been previously employed in the African trade, or contracted for, for that purpose, before the tenth day of October of the present year.

“ 4. That from and after the first day of May 1793, it shall not be lawful for any British subject to carry from the coast of Africa, in any ship or vessel owned and navigated by British subjects, a greater proportion of male negroes than of female negroes.

“ 5. That from and after the day of it shall not be lawful for any British subject to purchase, or take on board, or carry from the coast of Africa, in any ship owned or navigated by British subjects, any male African negro who shall be above the age of 20 years, or any female African negro above the age of 16 years.

“ 6. That from and after the first day of May in the present year, the owner or owners, or master of every British vessel, which shall be entered outwards in any port or place in this kingdom, or in His Majesty's islands or plantations in America, shall declare to the principal Officers of His Majesty's customs of the port or place from whence the vessel is about to depart, for the purposes of taking on board negroes on the coast of Africa, the general destination of the voyage, and the particular island or islands, in His Majesty's plantations, to which he or they propose to carry the negroes so purchased; and that one or more of the owners, together with the master or person having the command of such ship or vessel, shall, with two sufficient sureties, enter into bond to His Majesty, in the sum of one thousand pounds for every hundred tons burden of such ship or vessel, and in a similar proportion where the tonnage shall fall short or exceed the above burden, to comply with the conditions of the third and fourth resolutions. And that the master or person having the command of such ship or vessel shall proceed directly from the coast of Africa to some one of

His Majesty's plantations in the West Indies, or to the island of New Providence in the Bahamas, and there land the negroes taken on board the coast of Africa, unless the master of such vessel shall, by storms of weather, or other unavoidable accident, be obliged, for the safety of the vessel and the crew, to carry such ship or vessel into the nearest port of safety.

“ 7. That a duty shall be levied or collected by the collector or other principal officers of His Majesty's customs in the plantations, of 5*l.* upon every male negro exceeding 4 feet 4 inches in height, that shall be imported in any ship or vessel into His Majesty's plantations, from and after the 10th day of October 1797; and for every male negro whose height shall not exceed 4 feet 4 inches, the sum of 3*l.* and for every female negro exceeding 4 feet 4 inches in height, the sum of 3*l.*; and for every female negro whose height shall not exceed 4 feet 4 inches, the sum of 2*l.*; and for every male negro exceeding 4 feet 4 inches in height, which shall be imported as above, from and after the 10th day of October 1798, the sum of 10*l.*; and for every male negro whose height shall not exceed 4 feet 4 inches, the sum of 8*l.* and for every female negro exceeding 4 feet 4 inches in height, the sum of 8*l.* and for every female negro whose height shall not exceed 4 feet 4 inches, the sum of 6*l.*

“ And for every male or female negro exceeding 4 feet 4 inches in height, which shall be imported as above, from and after the 10th day of October 1799, the sum of 15*l.* and for every male or female negro not exceeding 4 feet 4 inches in height, the sum of 12*l.* Which duties shall, within one month after collection, be accounted for, and paid over, by the collector or other principal Officer of His Majesty's Customs, to the Receiver General of the island or plantation in which such duties shall have been levied or collected, to be applicable to the use of the said island or plantation, and to be under the direction and at the disposal of the Legislature of the same.

“ 8. That from and after the 10th day of October, in the present year, it shall not be lawful to import into any island or colony in America, under His Majesty, any African negro, or any Creole negro, or Mulatto slave, from any foreign island, colony, territory or dominion in America.

“ 9. That from and after the first day of May 1793, the tonnage of shipping annually cleared out from the different ports

of this kingdom to the coast of Africa, for the purpose of purchasing negroes, shall not exceed tons, and that the ports of London, Bristol, and Liverpool, shall be allowed such proportion thereof, as the respective trade in each port to the coast of Africa bore to the whole, upon an average of three years, preceding the 5th of January 1792.

“ And further, that from and after the day of the tonnage of shipping annually cleared out from the different ports of His Majesty's colonies and plantations in America to the coast of Africa, for the purpose of purchasing negroes, shall not exceed tons.

“ 10. That Commissioners should be appointed to examine into the losses which merchants, or others concerned in the African slave trade, may sustain in consequence of the preceding resolutions, and that these commissioners shall, from time to time, report to Parliament the amount of the indemnification to which the sufferers are, in their opinion, entitled.

“ 11. That farther provision ought to be made for the exemplary punishment of any British subjects, who shall be guilty of any outrage, violence, or malpractice, against any native of Africa, either in that country or on the coasts thereof, or on board any ship or vessel owned or navigated by British subjects.

“ 12. That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, beseeching His Majesty to take such measures as, in his wisdom, he shall judge proper, for establishing, by negotiation with foreign powers, a general concert and agreement for the final and complete abolition of the trade carried on for the purpose of importing slaves from the coast of Africa, into any of the dominions of the said powers; assuring His Majesty, that while, on our part, we feel ourselves indispensably obliged, by the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy, to take the most effectual measures which circumstances will admit, for accomplishing this important object, we shall enter on the pursuit of those measures with additional satisfaction, from the hope and persuasion, that His Majesty will be enabled, by the prudence and wisdom of the respective colonial legislatures, to adopt such regulations, within the several islands in the West Indies, as, by promoting their internal population, and gradually improving the condition of the negroes, may

provide, in the most advantageous manner, an adequate supply for their cultivation, and contribute to the security, tranquillity, and permanent prosperity of those valuable possessions.— That, considering the particular regulations which may be necessary for this purpose, to be the proper province of the colonial Legislatures, we have not thought it proper to make them the subject of our deliberations; but that, if any circumstances should arise, in which our co-operation and assistance shall be wanting for this purpose, we shall, at all times, be ready to afford it, with a zeal and alacrity proportioned to the importance of the end, and to our constant solicitude for the general welfare and happiness of every part of His Majesty's dominions."

Mr. Chancellor Pitt and Mr. Fox rose at the same time, but the latter gave way.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he should be sorry to prevent the right honourable gentleman a moment from speaking, if he had meant to go at length into any argument on the subject to-night. But as he understood it was the wish of his right honourable friend to name a future day for the discussion of his propositions, which were to be printed, and that the right honourable gentleman opposite had agreed to that delay, he would only trouble the Committee shortly with a few observations, upon what had been brought forward by his right honourable friend. In the arguments used by his right honourable friend, introductory to the resolutions which he meant to move, there was one which he must take the liberty of noticing in a particular manner, because it was very different from his own ideas in every respect. That point was the reliance which his right honourable friend placed upon the vote for the gradual abolition of the slave trade, which the House had given upon the last night of its discussion; and his opinion that the House, by the resolution they had come to, were bound to follow it up by adopting such a system only as tended to produce a gradual abolition. Here he would not hesitate a moment to say that he differed most completely from his right honourable friend, because he thought that the House was in no shape tied down by that vote from exercising their judgement again this session, as often as the subject came before them. Having said this much generally, he would say a few words on the propositions themselves, as offered by his right honourable friend. With regard

to those resolutions, which he gave his right honourable friend great credit for, in several respects they evinced the pains he had taken on this important subject, and the wish he had to do what to him appeared best. As far as they went to effect a gradual abolition of the trade, he approved of them ; but the moment that the system proposed stopped short of a total and immediate abolition of the slave trade, he would give it his most decided and hearty opposition ; and as often as the question came under discussion, would divide the Committee, and divide the House, until the great object, which the country, which he and those who were of the same opinion, had in view, was accomplished. It was not his intention now to go into any detail or argument upon the subject ; but when the day of discussion came, he would not only recall to the recollection of the House those strong and incontrovertible arguments which had been used on former occasions, but likewise would produce new arguments and new reasonings, from the materials which his right honourable friend had that night furnished him. And if any thing that was fair, or any thing that was consistent, ought to be attended to, he had not a doubt but the House would see the propriety of voting at once a total and immediate abolition. As to the word " gradual," he was quite at a loss

know any strict explanation that could be given to that term ; nor did he think that there was any one thing, either in substance or form, in the resolution of the former night, that ought to tie up the House in any way whatever, and he would declare it to the House, and to the country, as his decided and avowed opinion, that if there was one moment lost in determining upon the propriety of an immediate abolition, more than was absolutely necessary for discussing so important a question, even that would be too gradual an abolition. What he said now was meant rather as giving a notice of the line of conduct which he meant to follow, when the propositions of his right honourable friend came next before the House, considering himself not fettered or tied down by any thing that had gone before ; and even taking the very same principles for a gradual abolition, which his right honourable friend had laid down, they were the strongest reasons that could be adduced for an immediate abolition. These were his real sentiments ; in this way he meant to argue, and trusted he would prove to the House,

when the proper time came, that he was well grounded in asserting that the principles of his right honourable friend were such as ought to induce the House to disapprove of the resolutions he had read to them. There was one great and material point considered by his right honourable friend, which had not been so candidly admitted before by the enemies of the abolition, and that was, that a desire to increase the cultivation of the West-India islands, was no good cause for continuing so unjust and inhuman a traffic as the slave trade. The different situations of different islands had been stated, and it appeared that all the islands, except Jamaica, were arrived at that state of population which did not require a fresh importation of negroes. He had last year gone into this very minutely, and had asserted, that in the year 1787, all the islands were in a situation not to require any importation of slaves, unless for the purpose of increasing the cultivation; and it being granted that this, of all others, was the worst reason for continuing the slave trade, he would pledge himself to shew to the Committee, that Jamaica, in the year 1787, had a sufficient number of negroes, and therefore, after four years of importation, greater in number than former years had been, they must now, in that island, if the idea of increasing the cultivation is given up, be prepared, as well as the others, for a total abolition.—With regard to the ceded islands, some distinction might be proper, but that was no reason why the abolition should not be immediate in the rest; and whatever might be necessary for the ceded islands, was a point totally distinct, and that ought to be argued separately from the other islands, where, as his right honourable friend had very properly said, the slave trade had been already condemned. Upon all that was formerly urged upon this subject, and more strongly from the new grounds of reasoning which the materials brought forward by his right honourable friend had furnished him with, he saw the greatest reason to revise the resolutions which the House had come to on the former night, for which he certainly would vote; and if he failed in accomplishing his wish for an immediate abolition, he would then agree to any proposition that was most likely to shorten the duration of the slave trade.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, it was not his duty to speak, but his silence might be misconstrued into an acquiescence.

with any one of the right honourable gentleman's propositions, which, he declared, was not the case. He allowed the right honourable gentleman credit for his fairness in the manner of bringing forward his propositions, but agreed with his right honourable friend, who had just sat down, that all the doctrines; and all the additional information, which the ability and industry of the right honourable gentleman had brought before the Committee, tended more and more to convince them of the necessity for a total and immediate abolition of the slave trade. He was pleased to think, from the speech of the right honourable gentleman, that all the subterfuges and pretexts for continuing that disgraceful and abominable trade, were entirely broken down, by his own declaration of principles and sentiments, inconsistent in every sense with its existence. He regretted, however, that his mind seemed to be hampered. The resolution of the House, for a gradual abolition, on a former night, in his mind, was no reason at all to direct the Committee to act against their consciences and conviction now, or in any future stage of the business. One point was entirely given up, which the enemies to the abolition had rested much upon in all former discussions—the importation of convicts from Africa—which the right honourable gentleman had, in his speech, completely abandoned, as an improper and iniquitous part of the trade; but this was only one argument of the right honourable gentleman, which made against himself; for he would maintain, that all the principles and all the reasonings of the right honourable gentleman, were the best grounds for an immediate abolition, and he pledged himself to prove them such, when the day of discussion came on. He was determined to oppose all the resolutions, and to vote against them, particularly the term for abolishing the trade; because if the House once agreed that the slave trade was not to be abolished for eight years, they determined in fact that it may last for ever.

Mr. FOX said, that he had never been more gratified than by hearing the speeches of the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, and especially by that part of the former gentleman's speech, in which he so explicitly stated, that nothing had yet been done by the House that could prevent them, either in point of form or of substance, from returning again to the con-

sideration of the question of immediate abolition, for he now hoped, after the fresh motives for abolishing the trade immediately, which the total inconsistency and impracticability of the right honourable gentleman's proposition would undoubtedly furnish, a bill, conformable to the ideas of the first mover in this business, would be suffered to be brought in. He should not then enter into the detail of the resolutions, but there were two or three observations which he thought it necessary not to delay making. The right honourable gentleman seemed, by his own account, to imagine, that it was in the very nature of a moderate measure to displease both the two contending parties; and if the success of his plan of moderation was to be judged by this criterion, in this respect, he believed, it had the most distinguished success. If he judged of its merits, merely by that test, he might go home with the greatest satisfaction of mind; for as to all those gentlemen who had been on the side of immediate abolition, he could assure him he knew of none whatever who would not prefer the throwing out of the bill altogether, to the consenting to any bill that fixed so distant a period as that which had been stated. For himself, he had no difficulty in speaking his own mind upon the subject; he did not know whether he might not consent to an abolition in three years rather than no abolition; but if five years was proposed, he could not bring his own mind to agree to pass a bill abolishing the trade at so distant a period. His reason was plain; he hoped at a future time to obtain a more early abolition than he should obtain by consenting to so distant an abolition now.—The right honourable gentleman himself had confirmed him in this opinion; for in one part of his speech he had held a language so different from the terms by which he had attempted to induce the abolitionists to consent to a long term, that he was only following up the hint of the right honourable gentleman himself in refusing to vote for it. If it had been possible indeed to divide the House into separate Committees, to send them to different Committee rooms; the abolitionists to one, the anti-abolitionists to another; and if the honourable gentleman had then divided his speech into parts, and had come successively into the different Committee rooms, and spoken a part of his speech to each, it might have done well enough; but the misfortune was that each party had now the opportunity of

hearing what was said to the other. The honourable gentleman said to the one party, " You had better vote with me for a longer time than you like, otherwise you will get no abolition at all." This was very polite language to the immediate abolitionists; but the misfortune was, the anti-abolitionists heard it, and they were thus led to think, that if in any way they could throw out the bill, no abolition could take place. Again he said to them, " you had better agree to a shorter time, otherwise the trade will be abolished immediately; the country will not bear it longer; the House of Commons will not bear it, it was a condemned trade; and for fear of something worse, you had better yield." Mr. Fox declared, he fully agreed with the right honourable gentleman in this last threat which he had held out; he had taken courage from it; for his part, his fears of a perpetual slave trade (if these resolutions were negatived) were abated by the right honourable gentleman's own threat to the other gentlemen, and he assured those gentlemen who were against abolition, that if they disapproved a bill to abolish the trade in five years he would most unquestionably agree with them and join in throwing it out. He approved of the address in part, but as to the idea of meddling with internal regulations in the islands, he thought that an affair in which there might be some little danger, and from which no adequate degree of good was likely to arise. If their own sense of duty, as well as their own interest in improving the population by good usage of the present negroes, would not be a sufficient inducement to the provincial legislatures, he had no idea that a recommendation from this country would have any great weight. The right honourable gentleman had argued that the present state of the West-India laws was no proof of the degraded state of the negroes, and had compared it to the state of our laws against Roman Catholics, which were in truth dormant. The cases were widely different—the one, those in the case of the Catholics here, truly slept, no individuals put them in execution, and if no action was brought upon those laws, no actual mischief to the Papists came from them—but as to the West-India laws they respected the whole personal protection of the slaves—the slaves had no redress of any grievance—they had no protection of law whatever. Their masters also, who were the opposite party, were

the legislators, who both refused them the protection of law and themselves exercised individually the most arbitrary power over them. The famous law of Barbadoes enacted that if a master killed his slave in the way of punishment, the master was to suffer no penalty of punishment whatever. If indeed, he murdered a slave by wanton cruelty, the law said he should suffer the penalty of fifteen pounds—whether in currency, or in sterling made some difference certainly, and he was not sure in which of these coins it was that this enormous penalty for murdering a fellow-creature was to be levied. As to the parts of the right honourable gentleman's proposition, he was almost prevented by disgust from going into them; still it was his duty to speak of them; the right honourable gentleman had now quite given up the principle on which the whole justice of the slave trade had been founded; for he had fairly acknowledged, that the people to be transported were not to be criminals. He had thought (and truly enough as to that matter) that there was danger to the islands from the transportation of African convicts, and he had therefore confined the trade to the transportation of innocent children. In future the slave traders were only to be allowed to steal away children from their miserable parents. This was the remedy which the right honourable gentleman's moderation had suggested! This was thought no hardship and no injustice; it was presumed they were slaves already, and were bred up for sale. The fact, as every one knew who was acquainted with the evidence, was directly the contrary. Those who were held in a state of slavery, never were sold to slave ships, except for crimes. This was a notorious thing. These barbarians, these savages, as we considered them, entertain such a horror of our slave trade, that they never sell any of their own slaves to our slave ships, unless they have first committed a crime; they have too much compassion and bowels of mercy, savage as we call them, to part to us with the slaves that work for them, unless they become convicts. How then were these children to be obtained? But there were other difficulties which were such as to shew the total impracticability of the right honourable gentleman's plan. They were none of them to be convicts, because these would be too dangerous; and yet one of his ideas was, that there should be men twenty-five years old sold to us! How was this age to exclude

convicts? were there no convicts in our country under that age? he believed by much the greater number of them were below it. Again, how was their age to be ascertained? Where was the baptismal register on the coast of Africa to which they were to go and look into for the ages of all these children? How, he would ask, was the Captain to know a girl of sixteen from a girl of seventeen? How then could he tell whether he was breaking the act of Parliament or not? In short, nothing could be plainer than the impracticability of this very scheme of partial and gradual abolition, which nevertheless had been so confidently maintained, chiefly on the very ground of its being superior on account of its practicability. The immediate abolition was a simple, plain, practicable measure, founded both in policy and justice, and the House would only find itself involved in inextricable difficulties, and led into the most dreadful injustice, if it should take half measures, and attempt to legalize in any degree a thing so indefensible as the slave trade. Mr. Fox said, he was happy to hear the right honourable gentleman avow one principle, which he had done fairly and manfully, namely, that no importations were to be permitted on the principle of improving new lands, but merely on that of maintaining the present cultivation and population. This had given him considerable comfort, for if the right honourable gentleman and the House would but abide by this principle, and enter fairly into that consideration, he had no doubt whatever of their being completely satisfied, that the present stock could be kept up and did now fully maintain itself without taking any imported negroes into the account. The House therefore on examining this subject, which he would not enter into then, would, he was persuaded, vote an immediate abolition of the trade, As to Jamaica, it had struck him, and must have struck the House, the moment the great importations into the island were mentioned, that the cause of them was the quantity of uncleared lands in that island; the population of Jamaica had been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he was sure would be proved, to the satisfaction of every man in the House, when they went into it, fully to maintain itself; he could not help lamenting, that the right honourable gentleman should have so early, and, he thought, so hastily, pledged himself to a gradual abolition, without previ-

ously looking into the evidence and acquainting himself with the facts which bore upon the subject, and that he should have led the House on a former night, to agree with him in his general proposition, of inserting the word gradual into the motion. He hoped they would now see the impracticability of effecting the abolition, in the manner that had been so hastily held out. As to the question of compensation, he thought that ought to be considered completely, as a separate subject of consideration. The abolition of the slave trade did not depend, on the least, on the decision of that matter; let gentleman make out a case, and it should be fairly heard by the House; but let it not be thought that the British Parliament was to satisfy any obligations, or to evade the discharge of them (if such there were) by acts of injustice towards the Africans, who were no parties to the contract. We must settle ourselves the claims that might be made on us, and not commit injustice in Africa; in order to get rid of the obligation. He did not wish, in either way, to preclude the question of compensation; but yet he thought the right honourable gentleman had gone much too far. There was a complaint some time ago, Mr. Fox said, that we had not suffered lumber to go from America to the West Indies, as before the American troubles. Was there any talk of compensation then? Why, then, was a compensation pressed for not suffering slaves to be carried? In the former case, there was a much more natural ground of complaint than in the latter; for in the case of the slave trade, there was a radical violation of justice, while in the other case there might be something of a reasonable and almost a natural claim, from the vicinity of the American continent. As to the agitation of this question, which the right honourable gentleman had deprecated, there he must completely differ from him. The question never could cease from being agitated, till the trade was abolished. Could it be thought that the honourable mover, who had given so many years to it, and was so fully convinced by a long investigation of the subject, of the truth of all that he had advanced, would quietly give it over, and be silent for eight years? Would the country continue likewise silent? There would be a general election before that time, and was it possible to conceive men's minds would then be at rest when they had interested themselves so warmly, so anx-

ously, and so generally as they have done? Would not gentlemen's elections be affected by this question? would not the subject be revived by the contending parties, and the struggle break out continually with the greatest heat and violence? He did not mean to say that gentlemen ought to be induced by a fear of this sort to vote against a measure which they thought wrong in their consciences; but they must not imagine the agitation of the subject would be over. It was impossible to suppose it. No man, however romantic in the cause of slavery, however enthusiastic for injustice, could be so wild as to fancy that either the country, or the friends of the abolition in the House, would let this trade go on undisturbed for eight years longer. He wished some alteration to be made in the manner of bringing on the resolutions—namely to bring on first, that resolution by which the term of the slave trade's continuance was to be decided. The merit or demerit of many of the other resolutions might depend on this—and it would in every respect he thought be better. He should then wish to move first, the question of immediate abolition, which he hoped would be carried, confirmed, as every argument in favour of it now was, by what had appeared this day to be the right honourable gentleman's plan. If it should not, he should move a term of one year, then of two years, and so on; it would then be fairly tried what was that term which the House should be willing to adopt.

Mr. DUNDAS rose to explain. He said, the right honourable gentleman could not positively know whether he had read the volumes he alluded to before he moved the amendment or afterwards, but he could appeal to witnesses then in the House that his opinion then on the subject was formed three years ago, and that after he had perused the report of the Committee of the Privy Council. With regard to the honourable gentleman's proposition as to the mode of proceeding, Mr. Dundas said, he thought it was a very fair one, and had no manner of objection to adopting it; he would therefore on Wednesday move for the immediate abolition of the slave trade, meaning to give his negative to it.

Lord SHEFFIELD said, he was sorry the enthusiasm of his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox) misled him so far, as to make him fancy there was so prodigious a majority of

the public in favour of immediate abolition. He believed he had conversed with as many persons on that subject as any man; and he declared, that he found an immense majority against immediate abolition. At all events he flattered himself, that none of the strong expressions, or the kind of arguments he had then heard, would prevent any Members from giving their votes according to their real opinion. But he rose principally to say a few words, in respect to a new and very unjustifiable mode of attack and accusation, which had lately taken place in that House. Some gentlemen thought proper privately, and in the most concealed manner, to search for evidence, from any quarter, of horrid stories, and without due examination, or the least notice to the parties, let them burst all at once upon the House. To exert eloquence to inflame the public against a man, was the sure means of preventing him from having a fair trial, and was detestable and improper in a high degree. In the case of Captain Kimber, we had a melancholy instance of the effect of malice and credulity. He acknowledged he was much impressed by the story he had heard, and was anxious to promote an inquiry; that the guilty might be punished, or the innocent cleared. He said, he had examined the affair thoroughly for which Captain Kimber was committed, namely, cruelty towards a negro girl! and he had no hesitation in saying, that there was not the least foundation for a criminal prosecution against that cruelly injured man. Yet he is in Newgate and in irons, and he cannot have the opportunity of a trial sooner than the 7th of June. At the same time the expence will be very great. He concluded, by saying, he hoped it was unnecessary to say more to dissuade gentlemen from such unfair attacks on men who could not defend themselves, and whose characters, though innocent, were irreparably injured in the eyes of the Public. He then gave notice, that if any thing of the kind happened again, he should insist on bringing evidence to the bar, that the business might be examined.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, he knew not whether the word malice was applied to him. [Lord Sheffield said aloud—by no means]. I have only then, said Mr. Wilberforce, to clear myself from the imputation of credulity; for it certainly was not my business to inform Captain Kimber of the charges against him. If I have evidence that a man has committed a murder, I am not to inform him that I mean to prosecute him, and so give him warning to save himself by flight. The information respecting Captain Kimber was communicated to me by a man that sailed with him, who added, that the surgeon knew more than he. This man and the surgeon were examined apart, their evidence agreed, and they mentioned other persons whose evidence also agreed with theirs. I wish that Captain Kimber may be able to clear himself; but I cannot dissemble the conviction of my own mind, the result of honest and careful inquiry. I have found every charge of abuse as peremptorily denied in the first instance, and I have found, that to inquire, was to be convinced. All the circumstances of another case, were treated at first as neither true nor credible; in the Court of Common Pleas they were all proved. If I am chargeable with any thing on this subject, it is with mentioning so few of the abuses that have been proved to me, and with having brought forward only those which were accompanied with least circumstances of cruelty.

Lord SHEFFIELD said, he had imputed malice to the evidence only; fully persuaded, that if the honourable gentleman had thought it so, he would not have relied upon it. He had made particular inquiries into the charge against Captain Kimber, and was fully convinced that he was innocent.

Mr. DRAKE said, he was not one of those who had stamina enough, to be able to give his suffrage at seven o'clock in the morning: he had staid, the last time the question was agitated, as long as he possibly could, but was at length wearied out, and obliged to retire; he would therefore take that opportunity of saying a few words while he was able. He had imagined that they were to have had no debate that

evening, from what had been said by the right honourable mover of the propositions, and from the manner in which the subject had been spoken to by the honourable gentleman who had spoken after him, who was an honour to human nature, but whose generosity in the cause of the Africans was carried almost to a degree of insanity. But the right honourable gentleman who had followed him, had taken a wide field of argument, and had held a language which he regretted, to hear from a gentleman possessing such grandeur of understanding and such potency of argument. The right honourable gentleman had talked of their constituents? he declared for one that he sat there as a free subject, his constituents were the people of England, to serve them he was sent there, by a few who had the privilege of election. He would always stick by the people of England; but he scorned to hold a seat in that House on any other terms than those of freedom, and as a freeman. He little therefore expected to have heard such language from a right honourable gentleman who the other day had so nobly burst out

“ Justum ac tenacem propositi virum

“ Non Civium ardor, prava jubentium

“ Non vultus instantis tyranni

“ Mente quatit solida.”

Mr. Drake said, humanity and justice were inseparable, that the West-India islands were private property, and were to be considered as the vitals of the constitution, he therefore should vote for the gradual abolition.

Mr. FOX said, he was glad the honourable gentleman had given him an opportunity of explaining. If he was understood to have said, that they were bound to vote so and so, because their constituents desired them to do so, he was completely misunderstood. He was against the opinion of a gradual abolition, as neither founded in mercy nor justice, but he had guardedly told the right honourable gentleman, that if he thought the question of the abolition would be set at rest by carrying his propositions, he was mistaken,

for they would hear of it at the general election. With regard to that House, Mr. Fox contended, that it was a vital part of the constitution to be considered as a deliberative assembly, and that they were to argue, to listen, to inquire, and to determine, but in great and important questions it was of advantage to know what was the opinions of their constituents, in order to form their own opinion.

Colonel TARLETON said, though other gentlemen have dealt largely in violent invective, and consumed much of the time of the House in attempting to affix an indelible stigma on the African trade, and almost a general crimination on all persons who have ever been concerned in it: as I do not envy them their feelings, I shall not adopt their example by entering minutely into every branch of the question of abolition. Though I think I might assume some privilege on account of the situation in which I stand, as one of the representatives of a great and important commercial town, yet I shall equally indulge myself and the House in confining what I have to say at present to what I consider the most prominent part for this day's discussion. As general accusation is commonly more copious than positive defence, and more ingenuity, eloquence, and vehemence, are necessary to maintain the reverse of that proposition, which I have hitherto most cordially supported, I shall touch only upon those parts of the subject which are bottomed in common sense, and can be ascertained by inquiry and supported by evidence. I mean shortly to point out to the House the importance of the African trade to a very numerous body of the merchants and manufacturers of this country, and consequently to the kingdom at large; and then I shall indulge myself in the grateful task of defending the characters of a number of respectable individuals, who have been wantonly attacked with the most unexampled cruelty and malevolence. With regard to the capital engaged in the African trade at Liverpool, my own local knowledge will, I trust, give me the attention of the House, and carry with them some weight and consideration. One hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty ships sail

annually from the port of Liverpool alone, from 120 to 500 tons burden, constructed peculiarly for the African trade, and unfit for any purpose of carrying, &c. &c. The average of sailors 35 men to each vessel. An African ship would last from 20 to 30 years, and there are instances of some lasting for near 40 years.

The cargoes of African ships consist of the manufactures of Manchester, Sheffield, and Birmingham, exclusive of many articles from the East Indies and from Ireland, and in these three towns many thousands of poor manufacturers would totally lose their employment, and several houses of extensive capitals, who now find bread for them and their numerous families, would be thrown completely out of business; because there are, in each of these places, several capital houses, who confine their manufactures solely to the articles necessary for the African trade. In Liverpool, besides the merchants, many masters of vessels and inferior officers would lose their lucrative stations, and many industrious mechanics, who have served regular apprenticeships to, and have, for many years, continued in, a particular line of business, for the fabricating articles exclusively required in this trade, would lose both the capital they have acquired in their present stock, and their future employment. The outset of an African vessel is nearly equal to those of four other vessels of equal size. In speaking of the other part of the subject, I shall not borrow any of the violent and opprobrious epithets which have been too frequently applied in this House to English merchants and respectable individuals; but I shall repel the exaggerated charges made by some honourable gentlemen, relative to the late occurrences at Calabar, by stating some facts in an unvarnished manner, which have lately come within my knowledge. Colonel Tarleton then adverted to Captain Leatham's testimony: Captain Leatham, of the ship *Enterprize*, belonging to Liverpool, who was on the coast, and in the river at the time of the firing, though not otherwise than as a spectator concerned in the transaction, declares, and is ready to add the weight of an oath to his testimony, that the British Captains from Bristol and Liverpool fired *over* the town, with a view to intimidate the black traders into an observance of their contract, from which they had

treacherously flown : that no lives were lost, nor even any person whatever wounded thereby. That Captain Phillips, of the *Thomas*, of Bristol, one of the six ships in question, and several other persons from the other ships, were on shore after the firing, and are consequently able to ascertain the fallacy of the assertion made to this House. That there are several other creditable persons, as well as three natives of Calabar, now at Bristol, who can, and are ready to corroborate the same, that no French ships were in the river at the time, as was falsely stated to this House. That the entrance into Calabar is formed by nature in such a manner, that it is next to an impossibility to get out of the harbour without the assistance of the natives ; of course, we are entirely in their power during our stay in the river ; and if we do offend them, they have the means of punishing the aggressor, by detaining him as long as they think proper ; a circumstance which, previous to this period, they have frequently taken advantage of, and no doubt would have done it in this case, had they thought they had been dealt with either unjustly or injuriously. On the contrary, the several Captains alluded to received, on their departure, every friendly assistance the natives could afford them. From this statement of Captain Leatham's, from the offered depositions of the persons concerned, which may easily be obtained, I may fairly presume that I have overthrown all the tales of robbery, devastation, and murder at Calabar, which resounded in this House, and were echoed through the country ; and I may justly infer, that it is one thing to rail, another to accuse. An accusation requires a charge—it must fix the crime—it must mark the person—it must be proved by arguments, and supported by evidence. Shall I, therefore, said the Colonel, compare what has been said within these walls, with what has really been done on the coast of Africa ? No, Sir, I should lose my patience, if I turned my attention only for a moment on the delusive representation held forward to this House. I like not the recital of real horrors ; nor can I expatiate on the tales of a creative imagination. I rejoice in the vindication of innocence ; and I cannot but sincerely regret that I was not furnished with the invincible shield of truth, to repel this mischievous and malignant shaft on a former occasion.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, their being dismissed was no proof that they were innocent ; the account rather tended to confirm than contradict what he had said ; and if the forms of the House would admit, he was ready to prove every assertion he had made on the subject.

Colonel TARLETON said, there was a wide difference between the crimes stated by the honourable gentleman, and an omission in the execution of their duty, for which the Captains were dismissed.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, if the omission imputed to them was firing over the town instead of into it, he should prove, whenever an opportunity was given him, that they were well entitled to be restored to their situations.

Mr. ROLLE said, he would never vote on popular opinion. If he should differ from his constituents, he would rather resign his seat in Parliament, than vote against his conscience, as many Members, he feared, had done on the abolition of the slave trade.—[For this expression he was called to order, and explained.]—He concluded, with professing himself a friend to the gradual abolition.

Mr. DUNDAS said he should move, as his first proposition, on Wednesday, that the trade be finally abolished in the year 1800. This would give those, who were for immediate abolition, an opportunity of an amendment, and bring the term, at which the final abolition must take place, to a decision.

Mr. FOX said, this would not be a fair mode of fixing the term ; because gentlemen, who might vote for abolition in 1800, in preference to immediate abolition, if they had only to chuse between the two, might yet wish for an earlier period than 1800.

Mr. Chancellor PITT agreed with Mr. Fox, and suggested a mode of deciding on different periods successively.

The Chairman left the chair, reported progress, and asked leave to sit again on Wednesday.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 24th April.

Sir JOHN CALL moved the order of the day, which was for the second reading of the Wine-licence bill.

A short conversation took place, in which Mr. Bramston and others took part, on the dangerous tendency of the bill; and Lord William Russell on the propriety and necessity of it, which his Lordship deduced from several instances which occurred to him as Magistrate for the county of Surrey.

The bill was then read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Monday next.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 25th April.

Mr. DUNDAS moved the order of the day, which was for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider farther of the abolition of the African slave trade.

The Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee accordingly, Sir William Dolben in the chair.

Mr. Dundas then moved his first resolution, which was read as follows:

“ That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it shall not
“ be lawful to import any African negroes into the British co-
“ lonies or plantations, in ships owned and navigated by Bri-
“ tish subjects, at any time after the 1st of January, 1800.”

Lord SHEFFIELD said, he was glad they had at last before them propositions in any degree practicable. His view was, to obtain not merely the gradual abolition of the slave trade, but also the abolition of a mischievous discussion. His wish had been, to promote a cessation of the trade by removing its necessity; but he had not considered the limitation of time or numbers as expedient or practicable. However, he was disposed to favour the outline of the right honourable gentleman's plan, who, he thought, deserved the thanks of the country for the part he had taken. He greatly preferred the present plan to that of last year, which proposed the dangerous and violent measure of stopping the ports of the West Indies by a British act. Although we had a right to say, the slave trade should not be carried on in our ships, we should not pretend to say the colonists should not be supplied by other means. If we chose to give up the supply of our islands, it did not follow that

we have a right to starve them. Some humane gentlemen might say; they should not have live provisions carried in our ships, because it was cruel to put animals to death; we had as much right to say one as the other; and he insisted, that whatever more might be necessary beyond the prohibition of the trade in our ships; must be done by the West-India Assemblies. We had already tried the experiment of shutting the port of Boston; it would not answer better in the West Indies. Besides, we had since given up all pretensions to do it; for the act of the year 1778 reserves only the right of imposing duties for the regulation of commerce, and regulation and abolition were different things. He said, the immediate abolitionists endeavoured to impute inhumanity to those who did not join in their wild mode of effecting the cessation of the slave trade; but in truth the inhumanity was on the part of those who inflame the negroes to their destruction, and when insurrection takes place, our declaimers would be deemed the murderers, not those who opposed their extravagant measures. It was certain, our discussions would not be understood, and our negroes would not comprehend efforts in favour of the inhabitants of Africa, which do nothing for them. He said, he was sorry to observe that we had men in this country capable of dispersing mutilated accounts among them to excite discontent. As to the petitions, he declared they rather rendered him averse to abolition; not one had the honesty to say, we are ready to compensate for our humanity. He knew they were not the voluntary expressions of the people, but far the greater part had been procured by associations; and he should ever condemn such attempts to control the deliberations of Parliament, as he thought them highly unconstitutional. He concluded by saying, that a shorter time for the abolition of the trade than the year 1800 would be ineffectual.

Lord MORNINGTON began with declaring, that however ready he might be to admit that the plan proposed by his right honourable friend (Mr. Dundas) was fraught with advantages material and important, yet notwithstanding that, it was insufficient to the hopes that had always actuated his mind ever since the period at which he had first bestowed any consideration on the subject. The great blow to the trade, however, he was free to acknowledge, was struck, and he could not but feel

surprise at the proposition of his right honourable friend being short of an immediate abolition, when he recollected the masterly hand of him by whom they were framed ; when he recollected the eminent talents he possessed, and so successfully employed in the service of the country ; and much more, if he considered them as coming from one of sincerity, of zeal, of labour, and of diligence ; qualities which in his right honourable friend he knew so eminently to exist. But the defect did not arise from the want of zeal or abilities of its proposer. The defect arose from the nature of the trade itself. It was a trade which, from its very nature, admitted of nothing like modification or amendment ; between right and wrong there could be no compromise. We could not modify injustice ; and he could not help saying, that the resolution, as it now stood, was a mere proposal to moderate injustice. If we were to purchase the right of being unjust, we should purchase it at our own expence. He said, he should not go into the detail of the plan of the right honourable gentleman, but should confine himself to the first resolution, because if he should succeed in the amendment which he should propose, the other part of the proposed plan would become unnecessary. There was another reason why he should confine himself to this part, and that was, that the detail of the subject had been so ably managed, that nothing remained to be added to it at the present time ; it had had its effect on the House ; and after the resolution which the House had entered into, it was no longer inveictive to call the slave trade inhuman and unjust. It was so declared by the vote of that House, and it was admitted to be so even by those who supported it. The question therefore was now not “ whether “ the slave trade shall be abolished ? ” but, “ how long shall “ we continue to be unjust ?—To what period shall we pro- “ long our injustice ?—How long shall we carry on a traffic “ which we ourselves condemn and declare to be inhuman ? ” He really thought it was nearly needless to proceed farther on a point so plain, that he should be outrun by the feelings of the House, and that they would anticipate what he ought to propose. But yet there were some who had been, and perhaps might be yet, of a different opinion from that which he had formed upon this subject. Some had thought that we should be unjust for ten years ; others thought it was enough for us

to be unjust for five years ; others that we should be unjust for seven years ; that the present century should continue in disgrace, and that justice was to commence its operation with the opening of another century ! But this, he trusted, would not be the sentiments of the Parliament of the present brave and enlightened people of Great Britain !

What had been the grounds of the defence of this trade ?—That the number of negroes on the islands were not of themselves sufficient to cultivate the islands—that for that purpose we must have fresh importations, and consequently a continuance of this trade. It was admitted, that if the negroes now in the islands were sufficient for the cultivation of them, the trade should immediately be discontinued. Now, it would appear, that there had been no importation, that in any degree, of late years, upon the average taken of the whole, bore any proportion to the amount of the births and deaths, and that the mortality was chiefly among those who were recently imported. What was the result of this ? Why, that it was perfectly clear that these importations were neither necessary nor useful.

With regard to Jamaica, he should wish to take some notice of the cause of the importation ; and he should maintain the sufficiency of that island to support itself, as was proved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a former debate—not from any extraordinary abilities, although the House knew he possessed them—but from plain arithmetic, on which there could be no difference of opinion, taken from calculations accurately made in the year 1787. It appeared then clearly to the House that the mortality on the island of Jamaica was only one per cent., and even that mortality was to be imputed in a great degree to the importation of Africans. The whole number on the island was about two hundred and fifty thousand. The number in the list of mortality was only about two thousand. The importation each year had been ten thousand. Thus the Committee saw that the number of the importation was ten to one compared to the mortality. To what were we to impute this ? Not to the climate of Jamaica, he believed ; for, in point of fact, the climate of that island was nearly the best of all the islands. But were there no other considerations, from the year 1787 down to the present time ? Certainly there were.

He knew particularly well there had been internal regulations made for the increase of the negroes by birth and population. He knew also, that the bill of the honourable Baronet, who now sat in the chair of the Committee, so much to his honour and to the benefit of the Public, brought into Parliament to regulate the mode of transporting the negroes from the coast of Africa, had produced a considerable effect, the result of which was, that the mortality of those now on the island would be still less than it had been; then had he not a right to say, that the late importations to Jamaica had been made in such a manner, as to meet the event of the total abolition of the trade, or else for the increase of the cultivation of the island? Now, what was to be done with the prodigious number of acres remaining uncultivated in this island? Was the cultivation to be extended? Certainly not. The point was given up in the opening of the present proposed plan for the gradual abolition. If, therefore, faith was kept with the Public, that the cultivation of the island should not be attempted to be extended, a farther importation would be unnecessary. If not, the extent of that part of the island, which still remained uncultivated, was so great, that, in that case, it would be in vain to hope that the trade would ever be abolished. If we were to wait until all the islands were cultivated, he wished to ask, at what expence of blood, and scenes of horror, they were to be so? Should we say, that in this state of our revenue—in this state of our power—in this state of our character for honour, humanity, and all the feelings that are so noble in our nature, that all the scenes of blood, of horror, and desolation, which had been so clearly proved to have taken place, shall still continue? He hoped, he trusted, that the answer would be, No! That British commerce should not be stained with practices so foul—that the capital of British subjects should not be laid out in a traffic so degrading.

The case of the ceded islands had been stated by his right honourable friend on a former day, as differing essentially from that of our other possessions. If it did, he would have no objection to grant them compensation for the abolition; but he could not consent to keep the trade open on their account, because he was convinced such a measure would defeat the object which the Legislature had in view in abolishing the trade. It

had been said, that people had been encouraged to purchase lands in those islands, and extend the cultivation of them. It was true ; but it ought to be remembered, that when grants were made to them by the Crown, certain conditions were annexed to them, which the grantees were bound to fulfil. One of these was, that within a given and specified time they should clear and cultivate such a number of acres. Where steps had been taken to fulfil that condition, he was ready to admit, that if the grantees were stopped short by Parliament, and the slave trade shut up, they were entitled to compensation. The same could not be said of those who had neglected to perform this engagement ; they could not in justice call for compensation for a loss which they had not sustained, for reimbursement of sums that ought to have been, but that had not in point of fact been laid out in clearing and planting new grounds. If they should now begin to plant them, he could not think Parliament bound to allow them compensation, because it would appear, that after so long a neglect, they were acting only on the spur of the occasion. He was willing, however, to inquire into the case of the planters in the ceded islands, and to make them such compensation as should be fairly made out to be due to them in consequence, not of any neglect of their own, but of any act of the Legislature. Money ought not to be considered as of equal value with blood.

It had been said that the African slave trade had been sanctioned by the Legislature, and carried on under a positive compact, to which Parliament was a party, and that the merchants and planters, having embarked their property under the authority of the Legislature, in a line of business which could not be pursued without the assistance of slaves, the slave trade could not be abolished without injustice, if not ruin to the individuals concerned in it. This objection, however specious, was far from being solid ; for, looking into the statute, which the merchants and planters considered as their charter on this occasion, he could not find the shadow of any compact, of which an abolition of the trade, however immediate, could be called a violation. On the contrary, he was convinced that if the planters and merchants would adhere faithfully to the letter and spirit of that statute, it would operate, not as an encouragement to the slave trade, but to its abolition.

By the statute, to which he alluded, all persons concerned in this trade were restrained, under the penalty of 100*l.* for each individual breach or infraction of the law, from "taking or procuring any African slave by force, violence, fraud, or indirect means whatever." From this it appeared, that the trade, as it had hitherto been carried on, not only was not sanctioned, but absolutely prohibited by the Legislature under heavy penalties; and if he thought that it was possible to enforce those penalties, he would not call for an abolition of the trade, because this very act, by which it was said to have been sanctioned, would necessarily effect the extinction of it, unless it could be carried on without fraud, violence, or indirect means; and as he knew it could not, he was fully satisfied that the merchants would be the first to renounce it, if the penalties could be levied as often as they should be incurred.

Here then was the bond on which the anti-abolitionists dwelt so much. But did it support the arguments that they built upon it? Very far from it; he admitted, indeed, that it gave them authority to purchase slaves; but if he might borrow an allusion from our great Poet, he would say, it gave them not a drop of blood: they might take the pound of flesh; but they derived not from the bond, a right to spill blood. They were not to wage war, or cause it to be waged; they were not to procure slaves by violence, fraud, or indirect means; nor treat them, when procured, in such a manner as to endanger their lives. So that this very act, which was the charter under which the trade was carried on, was the most complete condemnation of it.

But it had been urged by the anti-abolitionists, and by a noble Lord in particular, that Parliament had not a right to prevent the planters from supplying themselves with negroes, or making the most of their estates, in which themselves and their creditors were so deeply interested. This he denied; for Parliament had often taken steps, and was materially affected; it had laid additional duties upon their sugars; it had varied the terms on which they might be exported from this country, and also the terms on which foreign sugars might be imported; nay Parliament had gone so far as to prohibit the importation of provisions into the West-India islands, without which

negroes could not be of any use, in any other than British bottoms.

Upon the whole, then, he would contend that the slave trade having been carried on in a manner that militated directly against the act of Parliament, by which it was tolerated, and it being next to an impossibility that it should be carried on without violence, fraud, injustice, and indirect means, the Legislature might, without a breach of compact, or of justice, annihilate it from this very moment.

The first time that the nation heard of this trade, or at least the first time any notice was taken of it by the Legislature, was in the reign of Charles II. when a Company was formed and incorporated under the denomination of merchant-adventurers to the coast of Africa: at the head of it was placed James Duke of York, afterwards King James II. a name ever inauspicious to liberty. By the act by which the King's charter was confirmed, power was given to the Company to frequent the Coast of Africa from the port of Salee on the coast of Barbary inclusively, to the Cape of Buona Esperanza, or Cape of Good Hope, also inclusively, and to take slaves from the regions, coasts, climates, states, dominions, &c. &c. of the whole continent of Africa, from the time of granting the said letters patent for the term of one thousand years!!!

His Lordship read a passage from the act, stating all these particulars, and observed, that unfortunately for those who were concerned in this trade, not one African Prince, State, or individual, was a party to this magnificent grant, by which whole nations, completely sovereign and independent, were given away, without their knowledge or consent.

Upon the whole then, he was for an immediate abolition of the slave trade, because in the first place its continuance, after it had been condemned as cruel and unjust, would be a disgrace to the nation; and in the next, it could be abolished without injury to the West Indies. Had he been reduced to the dilemma of consenting to the continuance of a trade which had been justly called a crime by a right honourable gentleman over against him, (Mr. Fox) or by abolishing it, effecting the ruin of our colonies, he hoped he should have courage enough to do his duty, and avoid the commission of that crime; but he thanked God he was not reduced to such an alternative, and that he

could put an end to the crime, without injury to those colonies. Some persons being beaten out of every other hold, had resolved to make their last stand on this ground, "that it would be in vain for us to give up the slave trade, for it would be carried on by other nations; so that the Africans could not derive any advantage from our self-denial." To this he would say, that he hoped no nation would pursue a traffic, which the greatest commercial nation in the world was about to abandon, as an outrage upon justice and humanity; but should he be mistaken, all he would say was, that it would be nevertheless our duty to renounce a trade, which could not be supported but by murder and fraud; and if he was capable of bestowing a curse upon an enemy, the greatest he could wish any nation, to which this country might be hostile, would be, that it should take up the slave trade, the moment we should have laid it down. We owed an example to Europe; we had been the first to sanction this abominable trade; we ought, therefore, to be eager to express our repentance and horror, and to declare to all the world our resolution to put an end immediately to so iniquitous a trade. Having said thus much in favour of immediate abolition, he would move an amendment, which he hoped would be carried; but should it be lost, he would still agree to a proposition, which, whilst it deprived him of the hope of an immediate abolition, would bring the trade to the next shortest termination. He concluded, by moving, That the words "1st of January, 1800," should be left out, and the words "1st of January, 1793," inserted in their room.

Mr. BEAUFOY said, the motion which the noble Lord has made, is so consonant to the earnest wishes I have formed, from my earliest youth, that if I now rise to state any doubts on the subject, it is with the hope, that in the course of the debate those doubts may be effectually removed; and that the conclusions of my understanding may ultimately correspond with the dictates of my heart.

The noble Lord has declared, that the British Legislature will never consent to a compromise with injustice. But I much fear that such a compromise is imposed upon us by an invincible necessity—a greater power than we can contradict has subjected us to the cruel obligation. For on what other

principle, than that of an over-ruling necessity, do we pretend to authorize the continuance in bondage of the 14,000 human beings who are now slaves in the settlements of Britain? It is not justice which teaches us, that because we have deeply injured, we have therefore a right to injure. Justice does not teach us, that a long course of oppression gives us a right to oppress. The House of Commons, in their last vote for the abolition of the trade, have not so reasoned; nor is the principle which governed them candidly stated by the noble Lord. The House of Commons conceived that the question before them was not, what is best, *abstractedly considered*, but what is best, *under all the existing circumstances of the case*. They were anxious to relieve their characters from reproach, and their minds from the bitter reflections of upholding a commerce, which all acknowledge to be the disgrace and scourge of our species; yet doubting, at the same time, if it were possible, substantially, and with real effect for the Africans themselves, to abolish suddenly and at once this inhuman traffic, they resolved to adopt, as the best practical, though not the best theoretical, expedient, the measure of a gradual abolition. They considered the slave trade not as a choice, but an inheritance; and they wished to escape from it by such means as should be found the best upon the whole. That our ancestors, in an age but little removed from our own; at a period too in which they had lately reformed the national religion, and professed a more than usual purity both in morals and in worship; that our ancestors, at such a period, should have resolved to establish a trade, which violates all the feelings of nature, and tramples on all the sanctities of religion, is one of those preternatural and portentous phenomena which confound the philosopher, and appal the Christian. But they *did* establish this trade; they *did* extend to this atrocious commerce the sanctions of law, and the aids of legislative encouragement. Thus circumstanced, the obvious duty to which we are bound, is that of shaking off this tremendous legacy, by such means as shall appear to be the wisest and the most effectual on the whole. It is that of treading back the line of injustice, by the safest and most certain path, and of considering in what mode, with the least hazard to ourselves, and, above all, with the greatest be-

nefit to the Africans, we fhall relieve the country from the horrors of the flave trade.

Sir, in deliberating on this fubject, the interefts of the Africans themfelves muft be deemed the primary objects of attention ; but when I fpeak of the Africans, I mean not to exclude from the number thofe miserable men who are already, by our means, and in our iflands, oppreffed by the calamities of bondage. Now, if the motion of the noble Lord fhould receive the concurrence of the Houfe, what is the effect it will produce on *them* ? We know, from the accounts on the table, that the number of flaves who have been annually imported for the ufe of thofe iflands alone, during the laft 20 years, has not been lefs, on an average, than 14,000 per annum. From other papers on the table we alfo know, that if the quantity of fugar imported into this country for the five *firft* years of the fame period, be compared with the quantity imported in the five *laft* years of that period, the increafe will be found to be little more than 3000 hogfheads per annum. But if thefe facts be admitted, and that they muft be admitted is evident, from the authority on which they are ftated to the Houfe, it follows that an importation of 14,000 negroes per annum was not, as the noble Lord has fuppofed, applied to the purpofe of extending cultivation, (for the near equality of produce difproves that idea) but was found effentially requifite to fupply the rapid wafte of life, and to fustain the perifhing numbers of the flaves. Thus circumftanced, it is evident that a fudden abolition of the trade will operate on the Africans already in bondage, as an increafe of toil and an augmentation of fuffering. No reft, no refpite will be allowed. The privilege of the Sabbath will be profaned ; the repoze of the night will be invaded. No age will be confidered as an exemption for the old ; no illnefs as an excufe for the young. Children, in their tenderest years, will be compelled to join the gang ; and the female negro will be lashed from the bed in which fhe is delivered, to the fcorching labours of the field. Callous from habit, inured from his infancy to the fight of human fuffering, and hardened to fcenes of horror, the overfeer will plead invincible neceffity for the additional labour he extorts. The planter himfelf, feeling with double weight the preffure of his debts, and compelled to furnifh the ufual quantity of fugar, or to furrender his per-

son to a jail, may lose, in the sense of his own misery, the compassion he would otherwise shew to the sufferings of his slaves. On the British Legislature he will charge the augmented calamities to which the negroes are exposed. He will tell us, it is you who impose the necessity of additional enforcements, by establishing the necessity of additional labour. It is you who give to the lash its unusual energy—it is you who urge the miseries of the slaves beyond the limit of human endurance—it is you who invigorate destruction, and accelerate the speed of death.

Thus the British Legislature will be exposed to the painful reflection of having aggravated the distresses it meant to alleviate; and of having, by too precipitate a benevolence, augmented, while it hoped to have diminished, the sum of human calamity. Such, I am afraid, would be the consequence of a sudden abolition of the traffic in slaves. But if, on the contrary, a short interval should be allowed to the planters, in order to enable them to provide for their approaching situation, I have no doubt but that such laws as that situation requires, would soon be passed by the Assemblies of the different islands. Effectual provisions would then be made for preserving the lives of the Africans from murder, and their limbs from mutilation. The females would then be protected from compulsive prostitution; from the miseries of lewdness, combined with power. The rights of marriage would then be given to the negroes; and they would at length be allowed to participate in the first and most gracious command of their Maker, “increase and multiply.”

Having thus contemplated the probable difference to the Africans of the West Indies, between immediate and gradual, though rapid abolition; let us next consider the effect it is likely to produce on the continent of Africa itself. On this part of the subject, one obvious consideration will occur to every mind, and that is, that the interest of Africa requires, not merely, that Britain should relinquish the trade, but that the trade itself should cease. It therefore requires, that in relinquishing the commerce, the measures adopted may be such as will not expose our settlements to ruin, or the empire to dangerous convulsions; for if these should prove to be the disastrous result, the effect will inevitably be, that other nations, far from

being, as the noble Lord supposes, invited by our example, will be deterred by our experience. Renunciation is not abolition. The first may, perhaps, be effected, (yet even that is a dubious opinion) by hasty resolutions, and a precipitate law ; but the last can only be accomplished by such a regard to our own safety, as may prove to the world, that the ruin of their colonies is not the price which those nations must pay who determine to relinquish their commerce in the human victims which Africa affords.

A right honourable gentleman has justly compared the conduct of the nation to that of a cruel banditti, accustomed to the trade of plunder and of death. His wish he has described to be, that we may no longer consent to pillage and to kill the traveller. My wish is, that in relinquishing the crime, we may also take care that the traveller shall be safe.

Sir, in stating these sentiments, I have not forgotten the manner in which the slaves are procured—I have not forgotten that whole families are condemned for a crime, in which the proof of innocence is as impossible as the proof of guilt ; and in which, therefore, accusation is conviction : I mean the crime of witchcraft. I well know how completely this traffic pollutes the very sources of justice ; destroys that security which constitutes the chief blessing of life ; excludes all confidence ; disjoins all society ; and in every village, and in every house, impresses suspicion and dismay. Still less is it possible I should banish from my remembrance the situation of the Africans on board the ships which convey them from their native land. I have not forgotten the iron collars on their necks ; the fetters on their hands ; the chains and bolts upon their feet : I have not forgotten the thumb-screws, the instruments of torture, nor the machine for forcing open the mouths of those who, in the steadfast purpose of despair, have refused all sustenance, determined to seek, by the most terrible of all passages, the protection of the grave. Who does not recollect, that by the evidence which the slave merchants themselves have given at your bar, it appears, that such, on board an African vessel, is the rate of mortality, that if the march of death were the same in the world at large, the whole human race would be extinguished in fourteen years ; and the earth itself be converted to one vast charnel house. Shew me a crime of any sort, and in

the slave trade I will shew you that crime in a state of tenfold aggravation. Give me an instance of guilt atrocious and abhorred, and the slave trade will exhibit instances of that guilt, more inveterate, more strongly rooted in ill, diffusing a more malignant poison, and spreading a deeper horror. All other injustice, all other modes of desolating nature, of blasting the happiness of man, and defeating the purposes of God, lose, in comparison with this, their very name and character of evil. Their taint is too mild to disgust, their deformity is too slight to offend. The shrieks of solitary murder; what are they, when compared with the sounds of horror that daily and nightly descend from the hatch-way of the slave ship! I have heard of the cruelties of the Inquisitions of Portugal and Spain; but what is their scanty account of blood, when compared with that sweep of death, that boundless desolation, which accompanies the negro traffic! Superstition has been called man's chief destroyer; but Superstition herself is less obdurate, less persevering, less stedfast in her cruelty, than this cool, reflecting, deliberate, remorseless commerce. It is from the abhorrence I feel of this murderous traffic, that I am anxious, beyond what language can express, that in renouncing we may also abolish. If by measures which zeal may applaud, but Providence must condemn, calamities which are easily conceived, but which I dare not state, should be brought upon our settlements, with what effect, with what possible chance of success, shall we adopt the justly-applauded proposal of applying to other nations for their concurrence in the dereliction of the trade?

Should it be asked, from what period I would propose that the abolition should be dated, my answer is, (but I speak with hesitation) an interval of three years may, perhaps, on the whole, be the best suited to my view of the subject. Standing as we do on the perilous edge of an untried situation, I shall not be thought to have deserted the cause of humanity, if, on behalf of the empire, and with a view to the real interests of the Africans themselves, I solicit this short interval, for the purpose of enabling the Legislature to explore and provide against the perils of the change to which they are hastening. Such are the doubts that force themselves on my judgement, in defiance of my feelings. If they are formed on a just concep-

tion of the tendency of the measure proposed, the importance of the subject will give them weight with the House ; but if, in the course of the debate, they shall be found to have no substantial existence, I shall think the hour that proves them chimerical the happiest of my life.

Col. PHIPPS said, that if gentlemen considered the slave trade as a question of morality, and were of opinion, that by such trade, morality was violated, they ought not, according to their principles, to enter into any compromise about the matter, but should insist upon an immediate abolition. It was odd enough however, to see that they could compromise not a little with their morality ; for when they could not effect that kind of abolition, their morality was so complaisant as to stretch itself, in order to accommodate itself to the views of others ; and thus it was ready to consent to the continuance for three years, of a trade which, it was contended, was immoral, cruel, and unjust. In this case, it was evident that gentlemen were not influenced so much by their own reason, as by the petitions on the table ; petitions, which he would not hesitate to call ridiculous and contemptible. He did not mean to arraign the right of the subject to petition ; but he considered it as restrained to those who had an interest in the thing which was the subject matter of the petition. Was this the case with the present petitioners ? By no means ; many knew not what they signed, nor were capable of judging in a case of so much importance. Many of them were poor ignorant people ; many others mere school-boys, and almost all deluded by persons who went about in search of signatures. These barely put these questions to the people. As freemen, can you be friends to slavery ? As Christians, can you wish to tolerate murder ? As Englishmen, must you not wish for the abolition of a trade which is attended with both ? The answer to these short questions was such as was expected by those who put them, and who immediately desired those who thus declared themselves enemies to slavery and to murder, to set their names to a petition for abolishing the slave trade.

These deluded people, he said, were little aware of the consequences which might attend their signatures : they were little aware that the abolition of the slave trade would subject them to taxes for raising the money to be paid as a compensation to

those who should be injured in their fortunes, by the abolition! If they had been aware of this, none of these contemptible petitions would ever have found their way into that House. He concluded, by saying, that he would vote for the original motion, and against the amendment.

The honourable Mr. Ryder and Mr. R. Thornton rose together.

Mr. RYDER said, if he intruded himself, he wished to explain the reason. He felt it particularly incumbent on him to speak early, not because he thought he could advance any thing more material than the honourable gentleman who rose at the same time, but because he was in a situation which he hoped many other gentlemen might be in, namely, that of feeling himself, from conviction, impelled to a recantation of those opinions which he had formerly entertained, and spoken, and voted upon. He confessed, when the question had been first brought forward, he was led to form an opinion from the impression that the abolition of the slave trade would induce the utter ruin and destruction of the West-India islands, and that had urged him to vote against it; but he did not know whether, in consequence of what he had since heard, any reason would in future induce him to vote otherwise than for the immediate and total abolition. After all the House had heard, the question they had to decide upon, in his opinion, was, whether in consequence of the risk of incurring a little inconvenience, and a little expence, they were to continue a condemned and a bloody trade, a single moment longer? For his own part, he was ready to declare, that he should not think he discharged his duty, unless he exerted himself upon every occasion to abolish it; by putting an end to it immediately, the planters would be compelled by absolute necessity to treat their slaves with care and tenderness, to use them well, and preserve them, to have the benefit of their work as soon as possible, as they would know they could not procure others at their deaths. Unfortunately, in this question they were compelled to consider the negroes as animals. By fixing no definitive period, in favour of which an argument had been advanced by the honourable gentleman who had just delivered his sentiments on the question, no abolition would be come to at all, and the business would be left where it had been before the last decision of the

House, to abolish itself. With respect to the opinion of the Public on public affairs, Mr. Ryder said, he was one of those who considered it as a desirable circumstance to know what the opinion of the Public was. It ought, generally speaking, to have weight in the deliberations of Parliament. At the same time he really believed there were petitions sometimes signed by persons, whose aim was to overawe the deliberations of Parliament, and such should be treated, as infinitely more dangerous than those of the other description. But he must contend that every person in the kingdom was interested in the question, as Englishmen, as freemen, and as Christians.—Should the present amendment, for which he would give his vote, not be successfully maintained, he would give his vote for the next shortest period of the abolition, in doing of which he should not consider himself guilty of compromising injustice, but of obtaining some good, when he was defeated in his endeavour to obtain the greatest good. He concluded by declaring his hostility to every argument, and interest in support of the trade, being in no degree inclined to hold a balance, with gold in one scale, and blood in the other.

Mr. R. THORNTON said, he should not have contested the right of speaking with the right honourable gentleman, (Mr. Ryder) who according to his opinion had made so good a recantation, and who had always the best claim to the attention of the House, but for the circumstance that he had not been able to deliver his sentiments on a former day; he was ready on most occasions to waive his privilege of speaking in the House, but he could not do it on one so important as the present. He did not wish to differ from a noble Lord (Lord Mornington) who had early delivered his sentiments on that subject, and from some other honourable gentlemen, in giving the right honourable Secretary of State full credit for his good intentions, but having done that, he must take the liberty of examining for himself, the extent to which the propositions of the right honourable Secretary went. It had been proposed by the right honourable Secretary, who had come forward as a mediator between the parties, after a full confession of the enormities of the trade, after telling the House that he had been long sensible of those enormities, after declaring that he would not send even convicts to the islands, and thereby taking away

the only plausible reason for continuing the trade, the right honourable Secretary, after those declarations, had proposed that they should willingly imbrue their hands in innocent blood, and suspend, for a limited period, the laws of justice and humanity. For his part he did not know how they could commit murder for the next seven years, in a more comprehensive way than by giving their sanction to that inhuman traffic. Law had been multiplied, and might be multiplied again, by that right honourable Secretary, to reconcile it with the principles of moderation and humanity; but he must ask how a man could commit murder, according to the rules of either religion or morality? Could one man, he begged to know, rob another of his liberty without being unjust? What room, then, he asked, was there to talk of one moment's delay in abolishing the trade? No gentleman, he hoped, would think of arguing that there was any contract established between the West-India planters at the time, and Government, or the public; a noble Lord (Lord Mornington) had so ably refuted every assertion of that kind, that it became quite unnecessary for him to take up that part of the subject. He desired to enter his protest against continuing for one moment longer, a trade which had been declared to be unjust. Having rested the question, as he conceived, on its proper foundation, he would however address himself as other gentlemen had been obliged to do, a little to the prejudices, the fears, and the interests of the House. Those who thought that so many descriptions of people must be ruined by the abolition, would find, upon farther inquiry, that opinion to be erroneous and founded merely on mistake. The capital of the London, Bristol, and Liverpool merchants, about which the gentlemen representing those places had spoken so violently, might be diverted into another channel, and new sources of trade with Africa itself, not having a curse annexed to them, would immediately invite the commercial intercourse of this country. But with respect to Africa, she would not, he observed, be expected to set up an infant trade at the moment they were ravaging her coasts, carrying off her inhabitants, and spreading desolation far and wide. Were that country left in peace and security, she might carry on with this nation, an honourable trade; innumerable articles, such as cotton, rice, wood, indigo, and many other productions,

too numerous to be recollected, might find their way into our own market, and he begged no one would presume to say that men could not work in their own climate, and under their native sun, on whose labour they were said to depend for the support of their West-India islands. In those islands the abolition would prove the only effectual regulation of the slavery that must for the present exist, and that he gave as an answer to an honourable gentleman (Mr. Beaufoy) who had stated that a sudden abolition of the trade would operate on the Africans already in slavery, as an increase of toil and an aggravation of their sufferings. He contended that, with good treatment, sufficient food, and some restraints, which morality might dictate, a succession in the islands could not but be kept up. It had indeed been said, that population there would decrease; without some abuse it could not decrease, unless it were an exception to the experience of every other part of the habitable world, and he contended that, even an extended cultivation of the lands might take place, though that had not been required by the right honourable Secretary, who had brought forward the resolutions. It was not right, he supposed, to consider all the resolutions at that time, as they were not regularly before the House, but he could not help thus early declaring, that nothing was more absurd than to think of ascertaining the ages of the Africans.

He had an opportunity, Mr. Thornton said, of seeing the son of King Naimbanna, who was lately come to this country, and he observed it was a fact, that, though in all other respects intelligent, he could not ascertain his own age.—[The African Prince was in the gallery at the time].—He had also talked with several other people who had been acquainted with him in his own country, and he could never make out from them how old he was. If, therefore, the age of the King's son could not be ascertained, there was little reason to hope that the ages of inferior persons could be known. Mr. Thornton then noticed the assertion, that the planters and merchants would run the risk of losing part of their property; he maintained that they would lose none; but, according to the opinion of other gentlemen, they would lose only part of that property, which, though he blamed no individual, had been very unjustly and unfairly obtained.

contrary to the rights of human nature, and in a manner that had cost much of the blood of their fellow-creatures. It had, he remarked, been asked on that day, who would come forward and grant a compensation? He was ready at a proper time, to come forward and inquire fully into the claims of those who desired to be compensated; but, he argued, that they were first to do right to the Africans, and then inquire whether the African merchants, the ceded islands, or any other parties, were likely to be injured.

The people of England, he observed, were called a humane set of people, that liberty was the boast of our island, and that no African was landed on our soil, who did not instantly become free. They were guilty, he said, of a contradiction, as long as they sent those miserable wretches elsewhere into slavery; they were governed by a selfish principle; they could send those wretches out of their sight to be vilified and disgraced, but they did not themselves like to witness their cries, their tears, and all their degradation. He had learned an old motto, *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*; but he trusted the dawning of the day of deliverance was at hand to that degraded and insulted people, and that they should not any longer stain with blood the national honour; and he called upon the House immediately to yield to the claims of mercy, for death, he said, might put an end to all future projects, and their insatiable avarice or wicked policy might sacrifice thousands and thousands, who would rise up in judgment against them, and they might never see the time at which their mercy was to begin. Let the House then, he said, secure to themselves the glory and privilege of bringing back to the state of men, a set of people degraded so low, as to raise a doubt whether they were of the same species with themselves, and one noble Lord (Lord Sheffield) on that night had even supposed it would be accounted unlawful for the Advocates of the abolition to kill beasts for food, still likening the negroes to the brute creation, and arguing that they must not kill beasts if they would not kill men! So hard was it, he observed,

for the noble Lord to get rid of prejudices which he had been used to entertain. Mr. Thornton next adverted to what had been said by Colonel Phipps, respecting the petitions: it was, he declared, trifling with the House to talk of their being signed by school-boys, and school-masters, and so to adopt the ridicule of another honourable gentleman, who corresponded with school-boys up and down the country. He entreated the honourable gentlemen not to insult the people of Great Britain united together in one common cause, nor to mock those who had sent them into the House. It had, he observed, been intimated, that the petitions had been obtained by a few individuals. What individuals could rouse the indignation of a whole country? Towns of greater and of lesser note had sent in their petitions. It required no particular education, he remarked, nor was it confined to any particular order of men, to comprehend the miseries of the African slave trade, or to be convinced of its injustice; the peasant and the mechanic, and the school-boy also could judge of its consequences, as well as the most enlightened characters in the House. He had the honour, he said, of presenting a petition from the borough he represented (Colchester) and the numerous body of his constituents, almost to a man, implored the House to put an end to this trade in human wretchedness. No regulations, he said, would remedy the evils they were bound to look to. He must even say, he dreaded the regulations proposed by the right honourable gentleman; he dreaded them because they might do some small temporary good, on which account the gentlemen in the West India interest might hereafter take occasion to petition Parliament not to abolish the trade. They might contend that the evils of the trade had been corrected, and might possibly make out a better case at the end of the term, than they could at present. He declared he did not think the House had any security that the abolition of the trade would ever take place. Mr. Thornton concluded with saying, he could not bear to look forward to the abolition of the

slave trade at any distant period, since he much feared that greater cruelties would, in the mean time be practised, than had hitherto been committed, and that every evil of which the traffic was productive, would be carried to a greater excess; having, however, no better alternative, he should vote for the shorter period, proposed by the noble Lord who made the amendment.

Mr. ESTWICKE condemned, as disrespectful to the Committee, the present attempt, by a side wind, to get rid of the decision that had been already made on this subject; a decision as solemn as any that had ever taken place in either House of Parliament; a decision to which, by a call of the House, every Member had been summoned, and which was carried, after the most mature deliberation.

The Committee rejected the proposition for an immediate abolition, and resolved that it should be gradual; and yet the noble Lord had this day brought the same point under discussion again, and if his amendment should be carried, it would have the effect of rendering the abolition immediate, which the Committee had formerly resolved should be gradual. This question ought, once for all, to be laid at rest: to keep it alive, year after year, could not be attended with any good consequences, but might be productive of much mischief. The petitions on the table were urged as reasons for the abolition; but such reasons might be carried too far; for if it was argued that the voice of the people ought to prevail, and that Parliament ought to do whatever it was required by numerous bodies of petitioners to do, then the deliberative faculty of Parliament must be destroyed; for it must attend to the demands of the people, not for the purpose of weighing them, but for that of granting them without any consideration or deliberation at all. He concluded with saying, that adhering to the spirit of the vote, which the Committee had once already given on this subject, he would vote for the original motion, and consequently against the amendment.

Mr. W. SMITH said, although, Sir, after the close attention which for some years past I have bestowed on this most important subject, I think I have attained a competent

knowledge of its various branches; yet, considering how fully, with how much eloquence and ability, it has been already treated by gentlemen of the first talents in this kingdom, I feel that it would be unpardonable in me to waste the time of the Committee by entering again on so wide a field; but, Sir, as I cannot excuse myself from once more delivering my sentiments on a matter which of all public objects lies nearest to my heart, I hope the Committee will afford me their attention while I take a view of the question as shortly as possible, in the very narrow ground into which it appears to me to be now reduced. Before I enter, however, on the subject itself, I feel myself compelled to say a few words on the petitions which are before the House, and the manner, the very injurious and improper manner, as I think, in which some gentlemen have taken the liberty of mentioning them. Sir, respecting the petitions there are two questions; the mode in which, to use the phrase of other gentlemen, they have been obtained; and the regard which is due to petitions in general, supposing them to be genuine expressions of the public opinion. As to the first point, the objections which gentlemen with all their industry have been able to muster, are too few, too unimportant, and too unsupported, to require any particular reply; but were they more numerous and fully proved, certainly in a case like this I should not feel myself bound to defend every circumstance relating to each petition, or to argue that among so great a number, no irregularities may have occurred from the zeal of any individuals: but, Sir, on this head, as well as others, the cause is abundantly strong for its own support, and needs no aid of mine. Let gentlemen but look to the pile on our table; let them observe by what multitudes they are signed, how respectable are the places from whence they have been sent; not merely villages or country towns, as one honourable gentleman has insinuated, but also from the most rich and populous manufacturing and commercial cities in the kingdom, (those two which are directly engaged in the trade alone excepted) from the metropolis itself, notwithstanding every effort which could be

used to prevent it; let gentlemen, I say, advert to these circumstances, and then persuade themselves, if it be possible, that the mere efforts of any society, (and how much less of any itinerant individuals,) could have produced such an effect throughout this whole kingdom. I say, Sir, the whole kingdom; for, though the concurrence of sentiment is undoubtedly very general in the southern part of this island, it is yet nothing to that perfect unanimity which prevails on the subject among our brethren in the north. In Scotland, one mind pervades the whole country; and I am sure that were a right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) as thoroughly convinced of this fact as I am (a conviction which a very short visit might produce) he would see no reason to treat with any degree of levity the opinions of his countrymen on this subject. Sir, the fact undoubtedly is, that the public being now acquainted with the real nature of that traffic which we seek to destroy, is equally zealous with ourselves for its entire destruction; convinced by the result of those long and laborious investigations, on the details of which I have already declined to enter, but on my share in which I never reflect but with sincere pleasure, because, as was so forcibly stated by a noble Lord (Mornington) they have so completely answered their purpose; convinced, I say, Sir, by the information which has been laid before them on the subject, the country has already determined that the slave trade shall be destroyed; and, whatever may be urged to the contrary, this subject is undoubtedly one on which any man, with the common feelings and common understanding of a man, is as competent to form a judgement as the greatest politician in this House. And this leads to the next point, what is the regard which representatives are bound to pay to the acknowledged sentiments of their constituents? And here, Sir, I own I think it the safest and the wisest doctrine, and most conformable to the constitution of this House as a deliberative assembly, that on all matters of general and national concern, each Member should hold himself bound to decide only as the dictates of his own judgement and conscience shall direct after the

discussion of the affair, paying, however, all due respect to the advice of his constituents, and recollecting that if he takes the liberty of judging for himself, he has no right whatsoever to complain if they, on finding great dissimilarity of opinion, think fit, on any other occasion, to seek for a representative, of sentiments more congenial to their own. I should perhaps applaud, Sir, the fortitude of the man who, on sound and just principles, and on great occasions, should voluntarily incur such a risk ; but if I could suppose that there were within these walls a single gentleman who stood indebted for his fear to himself alone, and while he pretended to represent the people of England, was in fact only his own representative, I own, Sir, I should not be able to perceive any great magnanimity in fighting the requests of his nominal constituents ; I acknowledge, Sir, that I could never discover a very superior degree of courage in braving no danger. And now, Sir, though I am far from intending to discuss minutely the propositions of the right honourable gentleman, I must beg to be indulged in making on them one remark—that whatever I may think of his proposal for the farther continuance of this trade, in whatever light I may regard his scheme for purchasing negroes at certain ages only, without the bare possibility of ascertaining their ages at all, or of taking only one description of persons, where it is the very foundation stone of the trade, and almost inseparable from its very nature, to accept all that are offered ; yet, Sir, I must acknowledge that there is certainly a most happy congruity between his means and his end. The right honourable gentleman proves and acknowledges himself, that the old English islands have practically confessed they are not in want of more slaves to keep up their present cultivation ; he has brought forward and admitted accounts, from which I could, and I am sure another right honourable gentleman will to conviction, prove, that Jamaica is, if possible, in still less necessity than they. He professes not to allow of importation for the sake of breaking up new lands, and he admits that the ceded islands form a case by themselves, which may probably be intitled

to a distinct consideration, perhaps to compensation; from all which I should infer, and I hope the House will do so too, that no necessity exists for retaining the trade at all. The right honourable gentleman, one would imagine, concurred also in this opinion; for, though he seems desirous of continuing some importation for a few years longer, yet as he has proved that there exists no occasion for any farther supply, so he proposes to derive that supply from a class of men, who do not exist; I say, do not exist, for I defy the right honourable gentleman to produce, from the whole body of testimony on the table, as much evidence of the existence of a race of men in Africa actually bred for sale, as would be sufficient in this country to dislodge a beggar from his stand, or a gypsy from her hedge; and yet on such slight and random assertions does the honourable gentleman propose to drag away from their native country for years to come thousands of our fellow-creatures, against whom not even the pretence or shadow of a crime is alledged; thus transferring to acknowledged innocence what has hitherto been chiefly defended as the punishment of guilt, and destroying the only plausible pretext which has yet been left to the advocates of this abominable system. I will here, Sir, leave the propositions, because I cannot discover in them any thing else which materially changes the ground of argument, or which ought to persuade those who on general principles detest this whole business, to permit its continuance for one single hour; and seeing that the whole matter is now brought into the narrow question between immediate and gradual abolition, I shall confine myself entirely to some remarks on the arguments which have been adduced for the latter, and which I think may be reduced to two.—Humanity towards Africa, and justice to the West Indies. Sir, as the idea of continuing this trade for the sake of humanity would have been in every possible combination, the very last which would have entered my mind, as I think it the topmast step in that climax of paradoxes, to which the defence of what is indefensible has given birth. I confess I should have much wondered, that any of the able advocates

of this traffic, should have selected such a station of defence, if I had not observed, that this miserable business has had as fatal an effect in perverting the reason and understanding of the wise, as in destroying the principles and morals of the ignorant. Instances of this, Sir, are perpetual. Famines have been said to be prevalent in Africa, although the country be both extensive and fertile. What remedy is proposed—What preventive measures are suggested? Better modes of agriculture doubtless, and increase of industry. Alas! Sir, no such thing—instead of cultivating the mind or invigorating the hands, nothing is thought of but to carry off the mouths. Depopulate the country, that its inhabitants may not be starved. Other persons, Sir, taking advantage of that concession which we are compelled to make, and to lament the existence of more natural evil than our utmost efforts can eradicate, deduce from it, what inference? That it is permitted by the great and wise arbiter of human affairs, as a field for the exercise of virtue? to produce patience and fortitude in the sufferer, to excite compassionate sympathy and active benevolence in those who have the ability to relieve? Not one such idea enters their minds.

Their argument leads to the direct conclusion that it is permitted for its own sake, and they who endeavour to alleviate the miseries of mankind are wild sectaries, absurd fanatics, raving enthusiasts, who know nothing of life in comparison with their wise, cool, humane antagonists, who as these miseries press not on themselves, are too prudent to attempt the application of visionary remedies to necessary evils, and too pious and resigned to the will of Heaven to attempt disturbing the ordinary course of providence.—I own, Sir, I have never thought such reflections worthy of any serious answer—and I shall ever be perfectly willing to rank with such sectaries as my honourable friend; such fanatics as the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer; such enthusiasts as the right honourable gentleman on the opposite side of the House, (Mr. Fox) without apprehending any great danger from such attacks on my understanding or reputation. Again, Sir, with respect to testimony.—In ordinary cases, in common cases, we naturally give the preference to that which best agrees with rational theory, and where the witness appears least interested; and if both these circumstances be combined, we do not hesitate

which to prefer ; but in this African business, we are required by its supporters, in defiance of every antecedent probability, confirmed by impartial evidence, to give credit to the random and vague assertions of slave buyers and slave carriers, of things almost impossible—that in Africa, causes will not produce their natural effects—that avarice will not yield to the offers of advantage, nor crimes multiply in proportion to the frequency and strength of temptation, and all this too when the very witnesses contradict each other. Do persons even on their own side describe the state of slaves to be scarcely distinguishable from that of their masters—do they represent them as naturally indolent, yet living in tolerable plenty as attached to their native soil, and quitting it almost with desperation. We are yet told their happiness is increased by being torn from it, and compelled to hard labour for the benefit of strangers, in a foreign land—and then, Sir, we and they are farther insulted, by being assured that their moral character is improved, and their rank in the scale of beings raised by this industry so forced upon them by the terrors of the lash. Though the accounts on the table prove, in direct contradiction to the hypothesis of an honourable gentleman (Mr. Jenkinson,) that even since all our regulations, one tenth die on the passage, and one third of the less happy remain within three years, gentlemen would attempt to persuade us that this quadruple decimation, this sacrifice of forty in every hundred, is no punishment to them, and that though under our management, near or quite half of these poor wretches die miserable in so short a period—it is yet doing them a favour to bring them from Africa ! Sir, when all these particulars are maintained, I can no longer be surprised at the use of the general plea of humanity. But let all the extravagances what have been asserted of that country, to maintain this plea, be allowed—to what cause is all this misery to be ascribed ? Let Mr. Edwards, while he asserts the facts, assign the reason too. His testimony at least is not to be suspected of partiality to our cause. He at least has not been bribed by the society in the Old Jury, to support every tittle of their evidence, respecting the effects of the slave trade in Africa, and to deprive the planters of all pretence for denying those effects. Says Mr. Edwards in his speech to the Jamaica Assembly, “ Mr. Wilberforce has been very rightly informed as to

“ the manner in which slaves are generally procured ; the intelligence I have collected from my own negroes, abundantly confirms his account ; and I have not the smallest doubt, that in Africa, the effects of this trade are precisely as he represents them.” Sir, the whole of that immense continent is a field of warfare and desolation ; a wilderness in which the inhabitants are wolves towards each other. That this scene of oppression, fraud, treachery and blood, if not originally occasioned, is in part, I will not say wholly, upheld by the slave trade, I dare not dispute. Every man in the sugar islands may be convinced, that it is, who will inquire of any African negroes on their first arrival, concerning the circumstance of their captivity. The assertion that a great many of these are criminals and convicts is mockery and insult.

Now, Sir, after this ever memorable concession of, perhaps, the ablest champion who has ever entered the lists in favour of this business, is it not the very height of absurdity to pretend to maintain such a system for humanity's sake ? Assuredly, Sir, we ought to have commenced this controversy by a definition of terms ; it is impossible that we and our adversaries can affix the same ideas to the words humanity and civilization ? Is humanity gratified by such practices as Mr. Edwards admits ? Is civilization to be accelerated by persisting in a system which upholds oppression, fraud, &c. ? Are men civilized by rendering them wolves to each other ? Are the interests of humanity to be advanced, by keeping a whole continent in a state of warfare and desolation ? How, Sir, can we suffer our reason to be insulted by such pretences as these.

But, Sir, gentlemen say that Africa having been long in these habits, we must keep up our intercourse, to wean her from them. What, Sir, can we keep up no intercourse but this ? Are we then reduced so low, that having for so many years maintained on that unhappy coast, a number of prisons called forts for the purpose of supporting this accursed system, we must now instantly abandon them, if it is to be abandoned ? No surely, Sir, let us not deny to ourselves, and to the country, the pleasure of retaining them somewhat longer for a different end. Where the bloody flag of rapine has so long been hoisted, let us now haste to display the standard of industry, the olive branch of peace. Let us henceforth use these strong

holds of oppression, to assist in correcting those habits of violence which we have encouraged, in some degree to compensate to the natives for the innumerable miseries which our intercourse with them has occasioned ; till by this happy metamorphosis, it shall come to be said of each of these instruments of tyranny, as it once was of the spear of Romulus, when planted on the Palatine Hill,

“ Et jam non telum, sed visu nobilis arbor,

“ Non expectatas dabit anhelantibus umbras.

But, Sir, laying aside all these arguments, supposing it even to be out of our power to do any thing immediately to correct the state of Africa ; if gentlemen are really sincere in their plea of humanity, if their only fear be truly of the immense slaughter which our dereliction of the trade may occasion on the coast, let me yet for a few moments request their attention to one other consideration. The most sanguine advocate for African barbarity will hardly contend, that all or even any very large portion of those now offered to the Guinea ships, would be put to death if not sold. Let them seriously reflect that of the 80,000 nearly which are now carried off by Europeans, near a tenth die in the passage, and that within three years, about thirty thousand of the number are miserably swept out of existence. Now Sir, I will take on me to defy the whole host of my antagonists to persuade, not the country, not the House, but even themselves, that with all their supposed massacres, their imagined sacrifices, their storied famines, and their real executions, a number in any degree comparable to this, would be destroyed in the first, or even in the ten years, to say nothing of the benefit and security which would immediately begin to dawn in the country, and farther if, as they confidently assert, our dereliction would not entirely abolish the trade—if other nations would still persist, though immediate here, it would with respect to Africa be gradual, and there would doubtless remain a sufficient demand, to prevent all chance of massacres, by carrying off all such as would otherwise be in danger of death.

Having thus, I hope pretty clearly, exposed the futility of the plea of humanity to Africa, set up, as I confess I think

it has been, in utter defiance of common understanding, I will conclude with considering very shortly the case of the West Indies ; and here, Sir, notwithstanding it has been proved irrefragably to my conception by the right honourable gentleman, that their interests, so far from opposing, absolutely demand the abolition ; that in every care and tenderness to them, we should not delay to pass this vote, yet, Sir, I will wave this advantage, and allow that by some individuals among them, at least, a degree of injury may be sustained—it may be well asked first, Sir, do we abolish this trade, because it is a crime in us to persist in it? Can it then be otherwise than a crime in them too? And can they demand compensation from us, because we deny to them the permission of being accessaries to, if not principals in, the commission of it, because we refuse them the liberty of purchasing men, whom they may, nay whom Mr. Edwards tells us they do know, are acquired by fraud, rapine, treachery, and blood? Good Heaven, Sir, if this be not another, and a flagrant instance of that dreadful perversion of the moral sense, to which I have before alluded, I shall seek one in vain. But, Sir, if this point be contested with me ; if it be said, that in full possession of these facts, they are yet innocent in buying what we offer to sell, and even in soliciting us to continue the trade, I will concede all this too. I will acknowledge, for argument's sake, that we are tied up by act of Parliament to continue to rob, plunder, and murder, for ever, for the benefit of others, unless we buy the privilege of future innocence from our accomplices in this guilt. What then, Sir, having thus conceded every thing as to the West Indies, what does it prove with respect to the point in question? Sir, as has been well observed before, if we are to compensate the losses of the West Indies, must it be at the expence of Africa? The idea is too extravagant and monstrous: and if this House should resolve on persisting in the trade on this ground, we never shall be able to obtain any credit with the nation for such a reason as this. We may injure our own characters in the eyes of our countrymen, but we cannot persuade them that evil is good, and good is evil. We cannot persuade them or the world, that what we have resolved to abolish, because it is unjust and inhuman, we ought to continue any longer to practise, because it is pretended to be politic. Sir, another gentle-

man, who has just sat down, complained that we had acted improperly in holding out to the House that this question would never be at rest till we had gained our point ; for that whenever any measure was proposed, from the agitation of which much danger was apprehended, the House might always be brow-beat, as it were, into compliance by such threats as these. Sir, the honourable gentleman mistakes both our principle, and, I think, the fact also. We do not mean to use any threats whatever ; but we do mean to say that knowing we have gained strength on every trial, knowing that the country is completely on our side, for these reasons we conceive it to be our indispensable duty to persist till we succeed ; but that no cause which had not justice to support it could possibly expect to succeed by such means, but must necessarily sink in the public esteem on every failure, till at last it would fall into utter contempt.

And now, Sir, by way of conclusion, let me intreat every gentleman for himself, as he values the principles of justice and the claims of humanity, as he values the honour of his country, as he values what must be closely connected with his vote on this subject ; when he shall coolly reflect on it hereafter, as he values his own peace of mind, let me intreat, let me conjure every gentleman in this House, before he shall determine to continue but for one other year, or even month, the existence of this execrable traffic, to put the question home individually to his own bosom! Let no man here imagine himself sanctioned by example or defended by numbers ; but let him ask himself, if his own wife or his own daughter were one of the trembling thousand, whom our ruthless and flinty vote is about to tear from their families, and consign to all the horrors of foreign slavery ? Were that the case, Sir, how would he then act ? Would he then be satisfied with the flimsy pretences of slave dealers, or the cries for compensation from the whole West Indies. I can only once more most earnestly solicit every man to give full and free scope to the unsophisticated feelings of his heart, to the plain dictates of conscience, and I think I can see the result ; but really, Sir, if gentlemen will suffer these sentiments to be stifled by what they may deem considerations of policy ; if they will not seriously attend to the voice of this inward monitor, I cannot hope “ that they will “ be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.”

Mr. WINDHAM said, that there had been so much strength of argument used in the discussion of this question on one side, that he had hitherto declined taking any part in the former debates, and this reluctance to rise proceeded from an idea, that independent of the solid reasoning, the eloquence, and the ability which had been exerted in favour of the abolition of the slave trade, the bare statement of facts so enormous and atrocious, as appeared by the evidence ever to have been inseparable from that trade, was sufficient to have convinced the most obdurate supporters of African slavery, that a continuance of so iniquitous and abominable a traffic for a single moment longer, was unjust, inhuman, and not to be defended upon any principles whatever. He owned, however, that he was now relieved from that reluctance to rise, by the turn which the debate seemed that night to take, and which made him rather consider it his duty now to offer his sentiments, because he saw something like signs of relapsing from what he thought had already been perfectly understood as the sense of the House, as well as the avowed opinion of the country at large, that the slave trade ought to be abolished. The necessity for an immediate abolition had been enforced by truths so strong and incontrovertible, that they surpassed even all the effects which the greatest eloquence and the best reasoning could produce. This evidence the House was in possession of before they came to any vote on the question; but they now had before them much new matter, which the discussion had from time to time brought out, and which must remove all doubts, if any there were on the subject. It had been endeavoured to argue this question as a matter of landed and commercial interests, and this species of argument was opposed to the dignity, the honour, and the Justice of a great country—to the laws of nations and of nature—to the wellfare and liberty of mankind—and he might say, to the conscience of mankind at large.—Some who were enemies to the abolition had introduced a sort of argument which never ought to pass unnoticed, and that with a tone of superiority, which they had no right to. They had spoken as if those who were against the abolition were the only men in that House who possessed wisdom or knowledge of the subject, and that the advocates for immediate abolition were but visionary enthusiasts, attached to an experiment

which they had neither judgement nor foresight enough to enable them to decide upon. Against this mode of argument he gave his most decided protest, and ever would resist, as an attempt to degrade virtue into a connection with folly. Arguments had likewise been urged to prove that policy did not always accompany morality ; but he would maintain, that they were inseparable ; however, to those who argued the policy of the slave trade, he must say that their arguments appeared to arise more from interest than morality ; and he must remind them, that the narrowest and most uncultivated minds were perfectly equal to matters of interest, and generally most addicted to such considerations. They likewise seemed to entertain an idea that it was not statesman-like to attend to any system or proposition, however conformable to the general freedom and welfare of mankind, that did not suit with what they consider the immediate policy of the moment. If it was worth while, he could go at large into this sort of reasoning, but he considered it unnecessary ; and as to morality, he would assert, that nations were, and ought to be, more bound by morality than individuals. Amongst private persons, and in common concerns, morality would take care of itself. If one man breaks into another's house or steals from him, he knows what he has to expect for his conduct : he would find morality a kind of retail trade, that would soon bring a return.

The principle upon which he considered the House to act, in their present situation, was a principle of duty without an option ; they must put an end to injustice against the Africans, without consulting the West Indies. If they do not, they gave a sanction to robbery, murder, cruelty, and injustice, as was proved by facts stronger than any thing he could state ; and that this was the opinion of the House was already ascertained ; for they had decided, after ample discussion, and from the strongest conviction, that the trade must be abolished ; the only difficulty that could occur was, in what way to do it. If they acted, as he trusted they would do, upon the principle of duty, they would take the most speedy and effectual mode, by immediate abolition, against which no one substantial, solid argument had yet been offered. It had been endeavoured to state, that we were in some degree at the mercy of the colonies, and that without their consent our attempts would be nugatory ; if

this was really the case, he should be very sorry ; but he knew it was not. And why ought we to consult them, after having agreed, on all sides, that extending their cultivation was no good cause for continuing the slave trade, and when we know that to be almost the only reason they can give for importing more negroes. There could be no propriety in trusting to their compliance, when we must know that their interest, or rather what they erroneously thought their interest, was directly contrary to the declared opinion of that House. If, in future, they could reconcile the colonies to their opinion, which he had no doubt might soon happen, it would be desirable ; but certainly the character, the honour, and the justice of this country, were not to be put in competition with the prejudices of the West-India planters or African traders. With regard to delaying the period for abolition, no real argument had been offered for that point ; and he trusted it would not be said that the period of a few years for abolition is nothing, when compared to the space of time in which they have been accustomed to slavery ; arguing thus, that because they had long suffered under their misfortunes, there was no great harm in continuing the trade a little longer ; like the person who, when charged with cruelty for skinning eels alive, answered, they were used to it. If such an argument was started, he would desire gentlemen to recollect, not only how many thousands were now suffering and labouring under injuries by that trade, but likewise how many thousands more of their fellow-creatures may be doomed to the same sufferings and the same injuries, by their vote of to-night, if it was, as he hoped in God it would not be, for continuing the African slave trade a moment longer. It was not, to be sure, in their power to give redress to those who had already suffered ; but how could they account to their own consciences for the injuries of those who might in future be imported, if they continued the trade for years ? The proofs of their sufferings were so strong, and the scenes of horror exhibited in evidence so monstrous, combining at once all the diseases of an hospital, and the confinement and chains of the most loathsome jail. Was this, he would ask, a situation to place innocent men in—was this fit for their fellow-creatures, or rather, did it not more resemble the regions of the damned ? Here he must add, that he neither did, or meant to exaggerate.

It happened not in one ship only, but was part of an established system, which some pretended to say was sanctioned by our laws. He then made some observations on the interests of the West-India planters, and those concerned in the African trade, whom individually, or collectively, he had no intention to reflect upon; but upon the arguments formerly used, and reinforced by the new facts which had come out, he grounded his wishes that the House might exercise the power that they possessed, in immediately remedying the most flagrant and nefarious injustice, by a trade that must, while it exists, degrade and disgrace the country. There had, indeed, been an attempt made to plead the justice that was due to the West-India planters, but the sympathy that was shewn for them, he thought, was of a very interested kind; those who argued for it seemed to be sensible that it was possible they might be West-India planters, but they did not allow themselves to think of being African slaves. With regard to compensation, he believed the House, and the country, would act as became them, but that was a matter not now before them. He never meant to go into a detail of the propositions, and detain the Committee long. He only called upon them to act from principle and duty; and he would leave the question here, convinced that sufficient arguments had already been used to confirm gentlemen in what way their votes should be given.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that much as he had trespassed on the time and patience of the Committee before, he felt it his indispensable duty to trouble them still farther on the same subject; and his reason for rising then was, a wish to address them before their patience was exhausted by the length of the debate. The arguments of the right honourable gentleman who had just sat down, were of such force, and delivered in such a manner, as entitled them to much weight with the House. As to what that honourable gentleman had said about statesman-like conduct, he would only observe on this question in general, that he had not the least hesitation in declaring, that considerations of humanity and justice would always as much, nay more, regulate his conduct upon every occasion, than any other consideration whatever; and he would feel still more ashamed, and almost think an apology to himself necessary, were he obliged to state that he never would allow the

cause of justice and humanity to be superseded in his mind by any policy, far less a policy that might be asserted, but never existed, as in this case. Before he entered either into general argument, or the dry detail which the nature of the subject required, he would endeavour to explain the line of debate to which those who differed from him in opinion, wished to point out to the House. He warned the House not to be led astray by adverting to what was not before them, and withdrawing their attention from the point at issue, which he would shortly state. As to the African slave trade, it was already the decided and deliberate opinion of the House, that it must be abolished, or as his honourable friend had very properly said, the trade is condemned, so that the abolition now is not so much the question, as the manner in which it ought to be effected. In other words, they had only to consider whether they were to agree to a compromise, as held out by his honourable friend, which he, for one, and those both on the same side of the House, and even against him, who were for the abolition, never would do, or, to adopt the amendment of his noble friend, which went at once to the great object of their wishes, an immediate abolition. The principle of duty upon which the honourable gentleman had called them to act, was expressly what he wished, because that was the only principle upon which they ought to act, and by which the propriety and the certainty of their determination would be regulated. He asked no more of them; If it was necessary to argue the point of form, and the regularity of their proceedings, he contended, that the result would be favourable to his wishes for an immediate abolition; but those who endeavoured to argue form against substance, would find as little assistance from that mode, as he trusted they would have from their other reasonings. If the trade ought to be abolished on the first of January, 1800, why ought it not to be put an end to on the first of January, 1793; or rather, the injustice and impropriety of continuing the slave trade being decided, why ought it not to be abolished by the vote of this night? This would be understood as an abolition; but of what was meant by the word gradual, no one had yet pretended to give any decisive and definitive explanation. Form was certainly useful and necessary, but in attending to the regularity of proceedings they must not forget the substance and im-

portance of their nature. Nor would he allow that there was any inconsistency in first agreeing to a proposition, and then relinquishing it, after being convinced that both its practice and tendency were injurious. If, for instance, he had agreed to a bill on this subject being brought in, or had proposed a new duty, or tax to be laid on any article, but found from new matter in the progress of discussion, that from existing circumstances it was improper and injudicious, would he be liable to a charge of inconsistency if he altered his mind, and gave it up? certainly not. But an honourable friend of his had charged him and others with inconsistency in this way; he had said, how can those who contend for an immediate abolition satisfy their consciences with a gradual abolition in two or three years? Certainly, if it was in their power to obtain an abolition, they never could satisfy their consciences were they to accept of any delay; but if it was not in their power, as might happen, though he sincerely trusted it would not, what could they do but accept of the most speedy means that they could get to make the abolition certain and effectual? He stated the respect he entertained for the pride, the dignity and the honour of that House, and his desire that they never might come to any resolution but from conviction of its rectitude: however, an attempt had been made to shew that unfair and improper means had been used to influence the House in their vote on this question; for his own part, he neither saw nor would have agreed to any such undue influence, and would therefore resist any attempt to support such an argument. He knew of no such ferment without doors as were said to be stirred up on this business, nor any arts employed to obtain petitions. On the subject of petitions, he would plainly and concisely state his own opinion, which was, that they did not at all weigh with him either one way or other, in making up his mind on the question of abolition; but he considered them as a voluntary testimony of the humanity and benevolence of the people, and believed them to be their sincere and honest sentiments. If not, they must be a sad mass of unnecessary and impertinent hypocrisy indeed: but even giving a full scope to the arguments of the honourable gentleman, and supposing that the petitioners had been told, that by the abolition of the slave trade, a compensation must be raised by taxes upon them, then if the table

was covered, and the House filled with petitions against the abolition, he, and those who thought with him, would pay no regard to those petitions, because they never would barter justice for popular clamour, or the honour of the country for the interest of individuals. He contended that there was not in all that had been said, after giving the greatest latitude to those who opposed the abolition, any thing that could justify the least delay. He contended that there were no grounds either of expediency, policy, or even interest, that could warrant postponing the abolition of a traffic so disgraceful and unjust; the mode therefore of doing it was all that they had to consider. It had been said that it is impracticable without the consent of the West-India proprietors; this he denied, and could never agree to, because referring it to them, or trusting it to their compliance, was absurd in the extreme, when their sentiments, and, as they seemed to think, their interests, were directly against the abolition; and to be sure they might make out a case for themselves, by which they might attempt to prove it so. In his opinion the abolition was vested in Parliament, and he trusted they would be cautious how they parted with it, or rendered it nugatory, by referring what they certainly were competent judges of to others who were not likely to judge so impartially. They ought to consider themselves as the authors of that trade, and being now fully convinced of its barbarous cruelty and injustice, it was their duty to put an end to it.— Were the West-India planters to be consulted, they might think differently; but that House had examined into the nature of the trade sufficiently, in his mind, to enable them to decide. He entreated, therefore, that gentlemen might not listen to arguments of expediency which had been already completely discussed and decided. The question now before them was not of expediency but of justice, which he hoped that House would never lose sight of. Having said thus much, he pledged himself to prove that the abolition must, in the result, prove advantageous to the planters, although their prejudices made them think otherwise; and while those prejudices existed so strongly as they were known to do, it would be in vain for this country to consult them. It would be applying to a wrong channel for advice or information, and trusting to delusive hopes of success, in the great cause of humanity and jus-

tice. He contended that the importation of slaves into the West-India islands was carried on for the purpose of extending the cultivation, and not at all necessary to keep up the present stock of negroes: by the accounts on the table, he undertook to prove that the state of the islands for several years back warranted him in saying, that they were able to sustain their present population, although the early prejudices which the planters imbibed might lead them to think it impossible without farther importation. He proved, by the papers on the table, that, in all the old islands, except Jamaica, the exports had equalled the imports for many years back; in many of them that there remained none of those imported; and as to Jamaica, the reason why the importation was so great there, was for that very cause which the opponents of the abolition had themselves abandoned, clearing new grounds and extending the cultivation of the island. Why then the abolition ought to be gradual he could not imagine. He hoped the same majority of the House, who voted for the gradual, would now see the propriety of voting for the immediate abolition.

There were only two possible grounds upon which they could support a gradual abolition; the one was, that an increase of importation was necessary for extending cultivation in the islands; and the other, that importation was necessary to keep up the present stock of negroes. Now, as the first of these was conceded, and the other, before he sat down, he would undertake to prove to be false, he must conclude, that any man acted inconsistently who did not change his vote, from conviction; and when he said this, he wished gentlemen to study real and not nominal consistency. In this case, he would rely upon having a great majority that night. Having argued generally the evidence in support of his statement and calculations respecting the old islands, he went into a minute detail of the particular articles from which he drew his conclusions. Barbadoes, for six years previous to the discussion of the slave trade in that House, had required only about 200 negroes, and by another account he proved, that in all the islands, except four, there had been no importation at all. From these accounts, founded on practice and experience, facts were adduced, too strong to be controverted by mere allegations or prejudices; and he maintained, that abolishing the importation of slaves, in an

interested view, was harmless to the planters, and that encouraging a superfluous importation, was injurious to their capital; from all which, he trusted the immediate abolition would be voted. He returned to the system of the Jamaica planters, and accounted for their great importation, from a fact brought out upon investigation, which was, that they had imported five times the number of slaves into Jamaica in the last three years, than into all the other islands, not to keep up the population, but to extend the cultivation; for he proved, that in 1787, that island, as well as all the others, could keep up its stock of negroes perfectly well. In support of this, he quoted the opinion of the intelligent and able historian of Jamaica (Mr. Long) who said, that if the equality of the sexes was nearly preserved, the population would increase. He likewise gave the authority of the Committee, who reported after the regulating act took place, and the statement of Governor Edwards; the inference he drew from all which was in favour of immediate abolition; and he contended, that his evidence was conclusive and undeniable. He likewise said, that one free negro was worth twice as much as one of the African slaves. He ridiculed the idea of being bound by the grants mentioned, and thought that grants, founded on a false and imprudent system, could not bind any country, nor could they be too soon repealed. With regard to compensation, he held out no promises or assurances on that head, nor did he canvass for votes in favour of immediate abolition, by offering compensation; when that question came to be argued, it, no doubt, would be treated fairly and fully. He was, however, none of those who thought there was any danger that the compensation necessary to be allowed to the ceded islands, could create a debt which this country was unable to pay, and hoped it never would be argued that we must refuse justice to be aggrieved Africans, lest we should interfere with the interests of West-India planters; such doctrines would ill suit the present and progressive prosperity of this country, and could not expect support from him. Extending the cultivation, he said, was destructive to the slaves, and ruinous to the projectors in the ceded islands particularly. It was well known, that in Dominica great loss of slaves, and want of capital, had been the consequence of such projects. In Grenada, there was very

little ground uncultivated ; in St. Vincent's the same ; and in all those islands there was no such disparity between the numbers of the sexes, as to give any alarm about a decrease of population. He contended, that the plan of cultivation might be altered without loss to the proprietors ; though sugars will not grow in all places where cotton will, cotton will be found to answer wherever sugar can be raised, and for this mode Grenada was particularly well adapted ; and it was notorious that the same number of hands can cultivate three acres of cotton, that one acre of sugar requires ; he might likewise add, that too much cotton could not be raised, the demand of our manufacturers at home being so great. He trusted they would not look to the future, and disregard the present state, of population, which was increasing ; and the equality of the sexes would take place the moment they stopped the trade, and the islands ceased to suffer the loss occasioned by the seasoning of the slaves, and their diseases in the Middle Passage. He had, he contended, shewn the means of an early, certain, and progressive increase of the population of the negroes ; which never would be practicable, while they were pouring in all those recruits, to augment the diseases that diminish their numbers in so great a degree. Dominica had been proved, by the Governor of that island, (Governor Orde) from undeniable calculations, to have been in a state of increase during the last six years, and at present it actually maintained its numbers.— There were many points which he could mention that would tend to prove the proposition he had attempted to establish ; but he had occupied too much of the time of the Committee to detain them much longer. The Parliament of England had acknowledged that the trade was contrary to every principle of humanity, religion, and justice. They were desired, he remarked, to have recourse to the means that led to the end, whereas these means were but the consequence of the end that he wished to be obtained. The planters, who conceived an abolition to be destructive and ruinous to their properties, if they more nearly examined the matter, would find that it was a measure wise and salutary. He mentioned a resolution of the Assembly of Barbadoes, which seemed to express a fear of the consequences of an abolition, though at the time they had no occasion for importations, nor had required them for some

time past. He called upon the friends to abolition to follow up the cause they had espoused, and give effect to the dictates of their hearts, and the conclusions of their understandings.— He affirmed that no reasonable man, upon a moment's reflection, could entertain a doubt of the necessity of a complete and immediate abolition. He concluded, by pressing the Committee to come to a vote for immediate abolition, as necessary to the honour, the justice, and humanity of the nation, as no ways dangerous or hurtful to the colonies, however much prejudice might make the West-India planters mistake their own interests, and called upon gentlemen to make a solemn appeal to their own hearts, as if before that great tribunal where they must all at last account for their actions, and then say whether there had been any arguments used that ought to induce them, from motives of interest, policy, or expediency, to continue longer so horrid, barbarous, and inhuman a trade.

Mr. DRAKE rose in consequence of the allusions that had been made to his speech on a former occasion. Mr. Drake acknowledged that he had then animadverted on the speech of an honourable Member, which he imagined at the time called in question the freedom of debate, when the honourable Member (Mr. Fox) had explained his constitutional sentiments with a frankness, a fairness, and a liberality that did him honour, and had perfectly satisfied him; but had he, he asked, on that occasion alluded to the petitions? He certainly had not. In reply to what an honourable Member had said of his elective constituents (for so he said he would always call them) he declared he never would sit silent when those honest worthy freemen who sent him to Parliament were arraigned; he paid them great compliments, and observed that the honourable Member had rivalled him in fame, and gone far beyond him, since he had gone down into the country and prevailed on the voters of a borough to elect him, without having any connection or acquaintance with the people, but merely from the fame of his public talents, and private good qualities, which he upon his honour believed him to possess in a very eminent degree. With regard to his constituents, were they to be bought, he declared he would not purchase them; he mentioned his having been appealed to by one of his constituents on the subject of signing one of the petitions, when he said to

him, " Yes, my friend, you are a freeman, and have a right " to sign the petition." With respect to the question, they knew very well the advanced period of the session, and that gentlemen were desirous of breathing a little fresh air; if the question passed that House, it must go to another, the Members of which might call for evidence, and thus lengthen out the session. Last year, he said, he had been adverse to any abolition, this year he certainly agreed to a gradual abolition, and he would state his reasons for it. He explained on what ground he thought that the abolition had better be gradual than immediate, and one reason was, that giving time to the West India planters to prepare against the abolition would lessen their claims for compensation.

Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE said, he always thought the trade ought to be abolished, and now, that it ought to be abolished immediately. He had property in the West Indies; he had tried the use of the plough in raising sugar, and found that it succeeded beyond his expectation. Other gentlemen who had property there would no doubt do the same, and find that much of the labour of the negroes might be saved. The abolition of the slave trade, he was therefore convinced, would be as beneficial to the West-India planters as honourable to Great Britain.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, his right honourable friend had stated the question fairly, and he was ready to argue it on the ground to which he had reduced it. It was clearly decided, that the trade ought to be abolished, and the point now at issue was the mode of abolishing. He would even go farther, and admit the question to be, in what manner could the abolition be most speedily effected? In this way he himself had put it when he proposed the amendment of gradual for immediate, on the fullest conviction, that unless the planters could be induced to go hand in hand with Parliament, it would never be abolished. On the question of humanity, there could not be two opinions; but how did gentlemen understand this question? Did they think it enough to wash their own hands of the trade; would its being immediately renounced by Great Britain satisfy their humanity? Or would they not think the ends of humanity more completely answered if, by a moderate continuance of it for a short time by this country, the general

abolition could be sooner effected with greater certainty and speed, than by any other mode? This was what he meant to argue; and unless time were given for the persons interested to convince themselves of the practicability of abolition without injury to their property, the experiment of the practicability would never be made at all. The honourable Baronet who spoke before him, had tried the plough with success, as a substitute for manual labour, and expressed his hopes that others would do the same. But to do this, they must be led by degrees; they must not be compelled by a hasty and immediate abolition. Parliament must not attempt to drive them to such experiments, for the attempt would be ineffectual. If not supplied with negroes by Great Britain, they would by other nations, which we could not prevent. Were the Dutch so regardless of profit as to refuse to carry negroes where they would find a ready market? Was it to be imagined that the Americans were so favourably disposed towards this country as to resist the temptation of forming so valuable a connection with our colonies? A connection once begun by supplying them with negroes would not end there; and we might lose the West Indies without accomplishing our object. In answer to this, it was said, that we had prevented them from being supplied with provisions and lumber from the American States; but was it quite certain that we had done this entirely? Besides, the cases were not parallel, for our islands got provisions from Great Britain and from Ireland; so that if we had shut up one source, others were still open. But by abolishing the slave trade, it was proposed to cut them off from every means of supply whatever. This, he was persuaded, we had not the means of doing; and anxious as he was for the abolition of the slave trade, in proportion as he wished the experiment for abolishing it to succeed, he wished it to be fairly tried. If it was said that the trade was so repugnant to justice and humanity, that it ought not to be tolerated for a moment, to what end had the House been examining witnesses and collecting evidence for four years? If the abstract principles of justice and humanity were alone sufficient to condemn it, this was surely time mispent. By the very circumstance of going into the inquiry, and continuing it so long, they admitted that the best and latest mode of putting an end to the trade was a fit object of their

consideration. We might say, that we would seize and confiscate all ships carrying negroes to our colonies. These ships must be condemned in West-India Courts, and where men's minds were strongly prejudiced, where they thought that they were suffering injustice from the mother country, and obtaining relief from other quarters, it was not too much to suppose, that the decisions of both juries and of judges might be influenced by these prejudices. In short, the power of this country to prevent the islands from being supplied with negroes by other nations, was not a desirable thing to bring to trial. All the arguments on one side had gone to say, that it was a question that could not admit of any discretion or modification whatever in its consideration. He was of a different opinion. For some years past, he said, every argument that had been urged that day, as to the abstract propriety of the trade and its humanity, might have been argued, since it was not less improper nor less inhumane four years ago than at present; it was not in the abstract point of view that they ought to regard the subject, but to see what mode of abolition would be the most practicable, and most likely to ensure its success. Mr. Dundas contended that the effect of the merit of the plan which he proposed, would be to shorten the duration of the trade itself. He begged leave to recur to an argument, he had urged the other night, viz., the situation into which the immediate abolition would put the West-India planters, with respect to their creditors, and which, he said, would operate so as to disable the former from the power of adopting the regulations which the abolition would render necessary, and which it was his wish to encourage the planters to adopt and enforce. Whatever the planter's inclination might be, he would not be permitted by his creditors to make any experiment that might appear to tend to alter the creditors' security. With regard to the calculations stated by his right honourable friend, in respect to the number of negroes, their population, &c. were he ever so disposed to admit their correctness, they led him to different conclusions from those drawn by his right honourable friend. Mr. Dundas entered into an argument to prove that the increased population arose chiefly from the great importations that had taken place within the last three years; not that he despaired, but, on the contrary, believed that the plan he pro-

posed would undoubtedly tend to increase the population of the islands to such a degree as after a few years to render the abolition fully adequate to their cultivation. In answer to what Mr. Smith had said of there not being any such species of Africans as those bred for the purpose of being sold for slaves, he referred to certain pages of the abstract of the evidence before the Privy Council; but he owned that there appeared to be some confusion, and he believed that the domestic slaves and others were confounded. He read two or three passages, declaring however, that, after all, he was not convinced that there were persons bred up for the purpose of being slaves. Having gone through his argument, he said, such were the outlines of his plan, but he was perfectly ready to withdraw his resolution if the House insisted on it, although his wish was to set the minds of the planters at rest. He agreed with his right honourable friend as to the jet of the question, and joined issue with him upon it, but he really thought that if the Committee would give the time proposed, they might abolish the trade; but, on the contrary, if this opinion was not followed, their children yet unborn would not see the end of the African trade. He concluded with declaring, that being fully convinced on the subject, and believing, as he did, that an abrupt abolition of the trade, so far from being attended with any good consequences, would do harm, and occasion serious mischiefs, he must necessarily vote against his noble friend's amendment.

Mr. W. SMITH in explanation said, it was impossible to ascertain the ages of the slaves purchased in Africa, and at a proper period he would prove that there were no such slaves in Africa as Mr. Dundas talked of.

Mr. FOX said, he had now but little to trouble the Committee with. The state of the question, thank God, was now materially altered. All defence of the trade itself was given up. It was universally condemned to abolition at some period or other, as inhuman and repugnant to the first principles of justice. How most speedily and effectually to destroy it, was all that remained for discussion. He was always of opinion that immediate abolition was the only practicable course; and if it had been possible to confirm him more in that opinion, the right honourable gentleman's arguments for gradual abolition would have done it; for respecting, as he did, the talents of

the right honourable gentleman, when he was compelled to resort to such futile arguments, better he was sure could not be found. The Committee was now called upon to decide this extraordinary question—whether they would themselves abolish a trade, which they detested and abhorred, or leave it to be abolished by persons whom they knew to be violently prejudiced in its favour, and who professed to have an interest in its continuance.—Why? Because they were told that without the concurrence of the planters they could not abolish it at all. The right honourable gentleman seemed to have forgot his admonition to the planters, when he opened his plan—his warning not to oppose a moderate and gradual abolition, for that the sure consequence of their obstinacy would be a much more sudden and violent abolition than they might otherwise obtain. Surely this was an admission, that Parliament had the power of abolishing on Monday, and what circumstance had since occurred to lessen that power he was at a loss to conceive. We have prohibited the importation of lumber and provisions from the States of America, but, says the right honourable gentleman, I am not sure that you have done this effectually. It is impossible to say that in any case of prohibition we can prevent contraband entirely, it is sufficient that we prevent it to any considerable degree. But then he tells us they are not so anxious to smuggle provisions, because they get them from Great Britain and Ireland. What—is their desire for getting slaves so much greater than their desire of food, that they will rather smuggle negroes than provisions in a famine? And such they tell us they have suffered since the prohibition of importing from the American States. If we confiscate the ships that carry them slaves, their Juries and Judges will give unjust decisions. I am not to contend that the verdict of a jury will never be warped by prejudice, but it would be paying the planters a bad compliment to suppose that they would decide systematically against evidence, and against their consciences. Their judges must be sent from this country, the right honourable gentleman would have the selection of them, and surely he would not recommend prejudiced persons to His Majesty's nomination. If this argument be good for any thing, it applies to the whole monopoly of our colonial trade, the laws respecting which must be enforced by colonial

judges and colonial juries. It is in the nature of every restraining law, that it may require force to put it in execution; although this is undoubtedly the last expedient to which a wise government would have recourse. Slaves are certainly more difficult to smuggle than goods. A slave, if intended for use when imported, cannot be taken to pieces to pass for another commodity, he must be landed in his proper shape, and, after all, he may tell that he was smuggled, and perhaps bring proof of the fact. These are, at least, difficulties in the way of smuggling, and the difficulty alone would do almost all the good that the right honourable gentleman expects from his regulations. But if it were true, that they would be supplied by foreign ships, Dutch or American, no matter what,—in God's name let them in any ships but ours! Let us wash our hands of the guilt of the trade—if other nations will commit robbery and murder, that is no reason why we should imbrue our hands in blood. We come at last to the futile basis of his argument, that the West-India islands will be convinced by his experiment, and voluntarily adopt the abolition. Is it a fair way of making an experiment, to trust it to those who do not wish it to succeed? If we are serious in this experiment, let us pass a bill to suspend the trade for five years, and see whether we shall resume it. This is the only rational way of making an experiment. But they are also to be convinced by arguments and evidence, from which they yet have felt no conviction. Their prejudices are to be removed by sober reflection, and their minds have time to cool. Their prejudices are erroneous notions early imbibed, which I see not how they can part with of themselves, and the heat of their minds arises from proposing abolition, which will probably return as often as the cause. To what then do I trust for abating that heat, if the abolition be immediate? To their observation of its effects and the force of truth—to the well-known maxim,

“Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.”

The right honourable gentleman refers them to the calculations of his right honourable friend. These calculations they have had before them since last year; what hope then is there that they will be more efficacious than before? I will not trust for

justice in a case such as this to the effects of reason on prejudiced men. Let us do our duty by abolishing the trade, and their reason will soon operate. All the arguments against the abolition will be just as good in 1800 as they are at present, unless the right honourable gentleman has discovered some rule to shew that arguments, which could not even gain a patient hearing in one year, would produce conviction in so many more; or that his right honourable friend was so transcendent a genius, that he could perform such operations of addition and subtraction in one year, as men of ordinary capacity could not comprehend in less than seven. This was not a question that had come upon them by surprise. It had been four years in agitation, and yet they were not convinced. If inquiry and discussion would not convince them, their minds, perhaps, were so constructed, as to require perfect stillness for its adoption.— On the chance of such an operation of intellect I will not consent to risk the honour and the reputation of my country. They say, that although we renounce the trade, other nations will follow it. It is with nations, as with individuals; they may sometimes countenance each other in a community of crimes; but it is one thing to have done wrong, and another to persist in it. It is one thing to have embarked in an unjustifiable traffic, and another to say now, that we are convinced of its inhumanity and injustice, we will continue it a little longer for the sake of our interest. The conduct of foreign nations, a conduct which I do not believe foreign nations will pursue, can be no excuse for us. Nothing can be so detestable or so destructive of all morality, as to argue from the possibility or actual existence of crimes to the lawfulness of committing them. If I think that a man will be robbed and murdered, am I, therefore, to say it is better that I should commit this robbery and murder than another? I shall get five guineas by it, and the present owner will not die an hour the sooner.— Next it was said, we owe much to the West Indies. If we did, let us pay what we owe, or say that we could not; but let us not say that the kidnapping of 240,000 negroes is a fit compensation from Great Britain to her colonies. The right honourable gentleman proposed that we should carry off only boys and girls. This would, at least, have had the merit of avowing that we did the thing openly, and not on any misfe-

able pretext that they were convicted of crimes; but this is now to be abandoned. I hope the reducing the tonnage employed in the trade, is not also to be abandoned. This would take away about four-fifths of the supply, and why they should be so anxious about the other fifth, we are not yet informed.—Would they patiently bear the loss of four-fifths, and risk a separation with Great Britain for the other? I am not much alarmed by the possibility of our islands getting into habits of intimacy with foreigners, but if they should be so infatuated as to prefer the continuance of this detestable and pernicious trade to their connection with this country, I would not vote a shilling of the money of my constituents to coerce them. This I have always said, and always thought, and always I was using something like the coward's threat, being persuaded, that they would consider the loss of our connection, and the advantages they derive from it, as the most formidable threat that could be made to them. If we abandoned the trade, other nations would probably do so too. If the opposite arguments were good, no nation would ever set the example, and it must endure for ever. As the first nation in Europe we ought to set the example, and in the cause of justice and humanity to claim the post of honour—of danger if there were any. He concluded with repeating, that he should vote for the abolition at the end of a short period, if he could not carry the immediate abolition—but that he would vote against a bill bearing so distant a period as 1800: firmly persuaded, that before that time the abolition must take place.

Mr. BURDON said, he had voted for the gradual abolition, but would now vote for the immediate, convinced that the latter was practicable, and the former not.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, it was his intention, had he risen at an earlier period of the debate, to have gone at large into the subject, in order to have made good his pledge to the House on Monday evening, to prove that according to the arguments urged by his honourable friend, in support of a gradual abolition, it would be impossible for him not to vote for the amendment of his noble friend. Mr. Wilberforce acknowledged that the subject had been so amply discussed, that it was not necessary for him to trouble the House long, he expressed his pleasure he felt, for the support he had met with, from

those whom he best loved and best valued, and said, he should also consider the support he had received from gentlemen, with whom he had not a personal acquaintance, as one of the happiest and proudest circumstances of his life. That it was impossible for him to see the subject distinguished, without his saying a few words on it, and that were there time, he would prove by the most unanswerable arguments that every friend to gradual abolition must necessarily approve the resolution of his right honourable friend. Mr. Wilberforce said, he would add but one word more; the honourable gentleman opposite to him had said, can you set this subject, as it had been termed, asleep by an immediate abolition of the trade? He answered, that an immediate abolition would be the only fit way of doing it, and he declared for one, that he could not give up the point nor cease to pursue the subject. He had last year exulted in the recognition of the rights of the Africans as fellow-creatures; this year they had gained ground considerably, and they were daily gaining ground, and in justice to those constituents whom he was honoured in representing, and who had unanimously almost expressed their detestation of the slave trade, he was bound to persevere, if his own mind and a sense of his duty did not compel him to do so. He said, he could go on for ever almost upon the subject, but he would no longer trespass on the patience of the Committee.

The Committee divided on Lord Mornington's amendment.

Ayes, 109; Noes, 158. Majority 49.

The House adjourned.

Thursday, 26th April.

Mr. TAYLOR, in rising to make his promised motion on the Newfoundland fisheries, said that he felt every reason to intreat the indulgence of the House, as it was his lot to bring forward a business, to which few gentlemen gave much attention. Before he offered any motion, he should enter into a dry detail of facts, but trusted he should be able to compress them into a small compass.

The trade to Newfoundland had always been considered as a great national concern, both as a source of wealth, and as the

foundation of our maritime strength and superiority. The merchants engaged in it took all the materials for carrying it on, the clothing and provisions for their servants, from this country, and brought home the return almost wholly in specie and bills of exchange, except a small quantity of soap, oil, and sugar. Manufactures to the value of 600,000*l.* were exported thither every year. Six hundred vessels were annually employed in it, and the regulation of taking out every year a certain number of green men made it a naval nursery of very considerable magnitude.

He did not wish to speak harshly of the Board of Trade, or of the noble Lord who presided at it; but he must contend, that the views of that Board, taken up from the act of Parliament, supposed to have been framed upon the suggestion of Sir Hugh Palliser, were highly injurious to the trade; and he was sorry to add, that this valuable commerce had been represented to him, as having seen its best and brightest days. Such burdens and restrictions had been laid on the merchants, that, unless the House gave relief, he was authorized to declare, as the result of much examination, that notwithstanding the extent of capital engaged in it, the trade could not subsist longer than two or three years.

The British Council had proved, that they did not understand the interests of the trade, for they had encouraged the bank fishery, and discouraged the residents on the shore; whereas the fish caught on the bank was much worse, because lying so much longer uncured than the fish caught on the coasts, and it never could be sold in Spain and Portugal when any other was in the market. The National Assembly of France had also, by large bounties, put the French into a condition of beating us out of the foreign markets. America was becoming our rival, and unless the restrictions were speedily removed, our trade would be shortly annihilated; upon these grounds, he thought there could be no reasonable objection to his motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee, to take into consideration the Newfoundland trade, and the nature of the grievances complained of by the merchants engaged in the fishery.

Mr. RYDER said, he should always be ready to acquiesce in the propriety of inquiry, when any fair grounds were stated

to shew it necessary, but must resist the motion in this particular instance, as it was manifest from the returns of the Admirals on the Newfoundland station, that the trade was far from being in a state of decline.

Mr. EDMUND BASTARD agreed to the motion made by his honourable friend. The merchants had never ceased to remonstrate against the regulations adopted by the Board of Trade. They had petitioned year after year, but to no purpose, and the trade suffered so much from the restrictions laid upon it, as to be very near ruin.

Lord SHEFFIELD stated, from authentic documents, that the number of ships sent out on the fishery from the ports of Dartmouth, Falmouth, Portsmouth, and Weymouth, had decreased within these three years by not less than 84 ships. The number of ships employed by Bristol had decreased one-third, and the number of seamen engaged in the whole trade, had decreased five or six thousand. From these circumstances no doubt could be entertained, that grievances and discouragements existed; but not to interfere with public business, he should be content with a Committee above stairs, or with a certainty of inquiry next year, and the suspension of the Judicature bill until such examination should be made.

Mr. Serjeant WATSON said, the unusual complaints of the merchants in his opinion was of itself a sufficient ground of inquiry; the apprehensions of the merchants were daily increasing, whether they were real or imaginary he would not take upon him to say; but he conceived, under all these circumstances, that nothing less than an inquiry would quiet those fears.

Mr. BASTARD, sen. remarked, that there were three papers on the table, each of which differed so materially from the other, that it was impossible, without the strictest examination, to come at the truth. The honourable Member then went into several statements, in order to shew, that in the course of the last year the shipping employed in the Newfoundland fishery had decreased to the amount of 167.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said there were two bills, the Newfoundland Judicature bill, and the bill for regulating the trade of that island. He then explained the principles of these bills; the first was directed to a temporary regulation, open to amend-

ments in the Committee; the second to a permanent regulation, founded on the soundest policy. It certainly was the duty of that House to listen to all complaints, and redress such as were founded in real grievances; but the season was too far advanced to enter into that general inquiry with effect, particularly as he wished to attend it himself, which at present he could not, from the pressure of public business at the time before the House.

Mr. BROOKE WATSON dwelt on the importance of the Newfoundland fishery, but was much afraid it was on the decline.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, if Mr. Chancellor Pitt would consent to pass the Judicature bill as a mere temporary experiment, to put off the bill for regulating the fishery till an inquiry had taken place, and also agree that the inquiry should take place early in the next session, he should withdraw his motion.

Mr. Chancellor PITT closed with this proposal, and Mr. Taylor withdrew his motion.

The House adjourned.

Friday, 27th April.

Mr. TAYLOR rose, he said, for the purpose of making his promised motion for a Committee to inquire into the evils arising from lotteries, and he assured the House, that he should occupy a very short part of their time indeed. When he first undertook to oppose raising money by a lottery, and making the plan a permanent system, he had been solely actuated by the hope, that he should induce the House seriously to inquire into the enormous evils of which that pernicious system of gambling was productive. Mr. Taylor declared he felt a considerable degree of satisfaction and pleasure, in the general concurrence of the House in his opinion on the subject, and in the support of gentlemen, with whom, on most topics, he had seldom had the happiness to agree. He had received several plans for a succedaneum for the lottery, and had examined their principles, and considered their operation; but he had not found

one of them, that while it had remedied the evils of the lottery in the least compensated for the loss of that branch of revenue, and some of them proposed pains and penalties, at the idea of which, he could not but shudder. He strongly censured the conduct of the inspector of the lottery.— With regard to insurance, however, if it were entirely put a stop to, tickets, which were at present 16*l.* would fall most probably to 10*l.* or less. He mentioned some facts, relative to the insurance offices, and said, that they were suffered to exist even under the very nose of the Treasury, and in the neighbourhood of the House of Commons.— Amongst other houses of that description, he particularised one, which he said was kept by a man of the name of Phillips, under the direction of one Potter, at No. 3, Charles street, Westminster; that a per centage of 6*l.* on all the profits was allowed him, and that when the lottery was over, Potter returned into the country, and came back to town at the opening of the lottery.

Mr. HUSSEY said, he begged leave to repeat the observation, that he had formerly made, namely, that lotteries were so detrimental to the morals of the people, and the evils of them so predominant, that he was sorry a Minister should ever have recourse to such a mode of revenue, and trusted that they would not be long suffered to exist.

Mr. TAYLOR moved, “ That a Committee be appointed to inquire, how far the laws to prevent illegal insurance, and other evils arising from lotteries, had been effectual to their object.”

Mr. DRAKE seconded the motion.

The question was put and agreed to, and the Committee immediately appointed, and ordered to sit.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS moved, “ That the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee to consider farther of the measures to be adopted for the gradual abolition of the slave trade, be read;” it was read accordingly, and the House immediately resolved itself into a Committee, Mr. Beaufoy in the chair.

The chairman then read the resolution, viz. “ That it is
“ the opinion of this Committee that it shall not be lawful to
“ import any African negroes into any British colonies or plan-
“ tations in ships owned or navigated by British subjects, at
“ any time after the first day of January 1800.”

Lord MORNINGTON, retaining all the feelings which actuated him on a former debate upon this subject, lamented that he had been unsuccessful in the amendment which he proposed, and being sensible also that it was the opinion and uniform sentiment of the House that there should be in this business as little evil as possible, he could not bring his mind to consent to the continuance of this trade for one hour without horror and detestation. Had he followed the impulse of his own heart, he should have proposed for the total abolition of this odious, abominable traffic, the second day of January, 1793, immediately after the House had determined by a majority, that it should not be on the first day of January, 1793. He was sorry that so infamous a traffic should exist for one hour—upon the justice of it nothing could be said—upon the humanity of it nothing could be said,—he meant that nothing but execration and horror could be expressed—being destitute of principle—being hated by all good men, and as far as regarded its justice or humanity, abandoned by its own advocates; what could be said upon the subject—what question was there upon the continuance of a trade so odious, so hateful, so disgusting—none but one—“ At what period did we
“ think it possible we should obtain its complete abolition ?” But some general observations had been made on the possible effect of an immediate abolition, and on the unfitness of the islands for any other sort of trade than that which is carried on by the negroes; he recounted the different articles of cultivation, shewing that there was not the least necessity for the fresh importation of negroes, even for the purposes of the present trade; but the truth was, that the islands were capable of other cultivation; here he paid a compliment to an honourable Member, who had in so generous and candid a manner mentioned the astonishing effect of the plough upon these lands. But there was an argument of great weight on the other side of the question, and much insisted upon, namely, that considerable time should be allowed for the force of truth to operate on

the minds of the planters and persons interested in this trade, and that for that purpose we should enable them to make experiments for a considerable time. Now the way in which he should put this point was this—Supposing that the propriety of the abolition of the slave trade was a truth, and supposing the planters and other persons who urged the continuance of this trade to have hard heads—He had conversed with many—Some of them had neither hard heads or hearts—none of them hard heads. But supposing their hearts to be flint, and their heads to be hard, and therefore not easily moved—the question then would be—“What effect a truth of a given force would have on a head of a given hardness?” He believed the Committee would be of opinion, that the time proposed for the purpose of convincing their judgement was much too long; for that, in point of fact, they were convinced already, and it was nothing but mean and sordid avarice that induced them to wish for the continuance of this abominable, infamous, bloody traffic—this commerce in human flesh—this spilling of human blood—this sacrifice of human right—this injury to justice, this outrage to humanity, this disgrace to human nature.—Private follies had sometimes been excused by the charitable. They affected chiefly those who displayed them. They were objects of compassion to some, and from the most severe they met with nothing beyond ridicule. But for crimes, and those of the most public, notorious, hateful, detested nature, nothing could be said in excuse or palliation. Every hour that this nefarious traffic was allowed to be continued, was a disgrace to Great Britain. He was convinced that the time proposed was much too long; and therefore he moved an amendment to the resolution, which was after the words, “at any time,” be inserted the words, “the first day of January 1795.”

Mr. R. HOBART was convinced that three years were sufficient for all the purposes belonging to this trade to bring it to a conclusion. It was stated to exist by charter, what if it did? Were three years not time enough by term of notice for its discontinuance? Was there any more allowed to the East-India Company, who held their charter, whose trade was less subject to control than this, and from King William? They had in fact but three years notice of a discontinuance of their charter; in truth there was not the colour of justice in their asking for

time. He should, however, not vote for the abolition of this trade at even the time proposed, if he thought it would be, as was stated, the ruin of the West-India islands; he was convinced the contrary was the fact; this conviction he owed to the debate on this subject on a former night; for he came to the House on that evening with a mind perfectly open to information on the subject, and he was ready to confess he had been fully satisfied in that debate. He could not help congratulating that House and the Public on the abolition of the slave trade, for it might now be said to have taken place. The trade had been declared odious and detestable by a vote of the House of Commons, and it was agreed that it should be abolished.--- There was one happy reflection that resulted from this. The people of England were taught by it, that in the House of Commons influence and intrigue might be employed, but could not prevail against justice. Truth, humanity and justice, clearly proved, will always be supported and protected in the House of Commons of Great Britain.

Mr. DRAKE said, though a compensation was not expressly consented to, from what gentlemen had said, he saw upon a strong case being made out, it would be given, which he was glad of, as he had ever thought, that a compensation ought to be made to those, who might suffer by the abolition. The amendment, however, of the noble Lord, was so near his own idea on the subject, that he could not but yield it his hearty support, and should vote for it accordingly. The plea of ejection of the slave trade was not founded, Mr. Drake said, on a ludicrous statute of Charles the Second, but on a subsequent constitutional act of King William, and a statute of George the Second.

Mr. ADDINGTON (the Speaker) said; that having in a late debate on the subject, voted that the slave trade ought to be gradually abolished, he thought it his duty to state to the Committee the ideas he entertained on the mode of carrying that resolution into effect. What he had heard from a noble Lord behind him, had afforded him sensations of the liveliest joy and the greatest pleasure; and what had been said by the noble Lord last Wednesday had been particularly grateful to his mind from feelings of personal regard which he entertained for his Lordship. Let the opinions of gentlemen, however,

be what they might, he should proceed to state his sentiments on the subject. The interval between the resolution, that the trade be abolished, and the period at which the abolition would take place, he admitted to be a most dreadful interval. He had stated the trade to be abandoned, and he begged to remind the Committee, and intreated them to consider the circumstance, that he never had mentioned one word as to the justice of the trade, but he had merely noticed the justice of those claims that might be made by the persons who would be affected by its abolition. If the interests of the planters were abandoned, the abolition of the slave trade, he was convinced, would never be effected. How was it possible, he asked, when the means of population were taken away to supply the great deficiency? How could they fill the chasm that they created? What he had stated was the result of his real sentiments, of his real opinion. In certain conditions of society, there were, he observed, combinations of justice, of policy, of humanity and of interest, that rendered it almost impossible to look to the ultimatum, or he should rather say the maximum, of one without counteracting that of the other; the question was not, he said, between blood and gold, nor between what now actually was, and what might be hereafter, but it was whether an immediate or a gradual abolition would best effect the object which the Committee had in view: for his part, he thought, that object would be most safely and certainly attained, by protracting the period of abolition, and therefore he wished 1796 were the year proposed instead of that contained in the amendment.

He was convinced that neither the welfare of the West-India islands—the justice due to the supporters of the trade—nor even the happiness of Africa, would be promoted by an abolition at a shorter period. Here he recapitulated the arguments which had been often urged in favour of the gradual abolition; particularly those which favoured certain regulations with regard to the improvement of the morals, and the increase of the population of the negroes. He explained points which he had touched on in the former debate, and removed all impressions that had been supposed to be falsely taken in the course of his former speech; and observed he was decidedly of opinion,

that the period he had mentioned was absolutely necessary for the gradual abolition of the trade.

Mr. Chancellor PITT lamented that his efforts on this subject had hitherto not been successful, but he was consoled with the thought that the House had come to a resolution declarative of the infamy of this trade—that all parties had concurred in reprobating it—that even its advocates had been compelled to acknowledge its infamy. The question now was only the continuance of this abominable traffic, which even its friends thought so intolerable, that it ought to be crushed. Jamaica had imported one hundred and fifty thousand negroes in the course of twenty years, and this was admitted to be only one tenth of the trade. Was there even, could there be any thing beyond the enormity of this infamous traffic? The very thought of it was beyond human endurance. But it was allowed that the trade was infamous; but the abolition of it was resolvable to a question of expediency; and then when the trade was argued as a commercial case, then its advocates, in order to continue it, deserted even the principles of commerce, so that it seemed that a traffic in the liberty, the blood, the life, of human beings, was not to have even the advantages of the common rules of arithmetic which governed all other commercial dealings. The point now in dispute was only one year, as he understood, for that the amendment proposed the year 1795 for the abolition, while the year 1796 was only contended for on the other side. As to those who were concerned in the trade, a year would not make much difference, but did it make no alteration to the unhappy slaves? It was true that in the course of commercial concerns in general it was said sometimes to be beneath the magnanimity of a man of honour to insist on a scrupulous exactness in his own favour upon a disputed item in accounts, but did it make any part of our magnanimity to be exact in our own favour in the traffic of human blood. When a man gave up 500l. or 1000l. against himself upon a complicated reckoning, he was called generous, and when he insisted on it in his own favour he was deemed niggardly; the common course, when parties disagreed, was, what the vulgar phrase called, “to split the difference.” If he could feel that he was to calculate upon the subject in this way, the side on which he should determine it was in favour of

the unhappy sufferers—not of those who oppressed them. But this one year was only to shew the planters that Parliament were willing to be liberal to them. “ Sir,” said he, “ I do not understand the complimenting away the lives of so many human beings. I do not understand the principle on which a few individuals are to be complimented, and their minds set at rest at the expence and total sacrifice of the interest, the security, the happiness of a whole quarter of this world, which from our foul practices has for a vast length of time been a scene of misery and horror. I say, because I feel, that every hour you continue this trade, you are guilty of an offence beyond your power to atone for, and by your indulgence to the planters, thousands of human beings are to be miserable for ever.” Notwithstanding the bill passed for regulating the Middle Passage, even now the loss of the trade was no less than ten per cent; such was still the mortality of this deleterious traffic. “ Every year,” said he, “ in which you continue this abominable trade, you add thousands to the catalogue of misery, which if you could behold in a single instance you would revolt with horror from the scene, but the size of the misery prevents you from beholding it. Five hundred out of one thousand that are taken in this traffic, perish in this scene of horror; are miserable victims brought to their graves; this is the effect of this system of slavery.—The remaining part of this miserable group are tainted both in body and in mind, covered with disease and infection, tainting the very earth on which they tread, and the air in which they breathe, carrying with them the seeds of pestilence and insurrection to your islands. Let me then ask the House whether I am improperly pressing upon the House a question, whether they can derive any advantage from these doubtful effects of a calculation on the continuance of the traffic; and whether they think that two will not be better than three years for its continuance? I feel the infamy of the trade so heavily, the impolicy of it so clearly, that I am ashamed I have not been able to convince the House to abandon it altogether at an instant—to pronounce with one voice the immediate and total abolition. There is no excuse for us, seeing this infernal traffic as we do. It is the very death of justice to utter a syllable in support of it. Sir, I know

“ I state this subject with warmth—I feel it is impossible
“ for me not to do so, or if it was, I should detest myself
“ for the exercise of moderation. I cannot, without suffer-
“ ing every feeling and every passion that ought to rise in
“ the cause of humanity to sleep within me, speak coolly
“ upon such a subject. Did they feel, as I think they
“ ought, I am sure the decision of the House would be
“ with us for a total and immediate abolition of this abo-
“ minable traffic ”—As to the probability upon this subject,
“ that in the year 1795, the plantations will not be in a state
fit to carry on business without the importation of fresh ne-
groes, he would say, that there was no probability of that
conclusion. They would be in a situation in 1795 to go on
without importation—they would be in that situation in 1794,
they would be in that situation in 1793, for he had proved
them to be in that situation in 1788. In short, unless he
had misunderstood the subject, and unless some reason, much
superior to any he had yet heard, were adduced, he should
think it the most singular act that ever was done by a delibe-
rative assembly, to refuse to assent to the proposed amend-
ment ; it was by a resolution declared to be the first object of
their desire, the first object of their duty, and the first object
of their inclination.

Mr. ADDINGTON rose to explain. He re-stated a pas-
sage or two of his speech, which he was anxious to have cor-
rectly understood.

Colonel TARLETON said, he rose to comply with the
cordial wishes of his heart in spite of every perversion of ar-
gument, and every misrepresentation of fact by the honour-
able and right honourable orators of that House, who had
declared, that such means were justifiable to attain so great
an end as the abolition of the slave trade. As the right ho-
nourable orators who had, and certainly ought to have, the
greatest authority in that House, on account of the splendor
of their abilities, had thought proper to join in the present
race for popularity, it would be fruitless for him to attempt
to stem the tide of clamour and prejudice ; yet he would
still content himself in making a short appeal to the good

sense and judgement of the House, as the protectors of men, whose characters had been loaded with every vituperative epithet that malice could invent, or calumny could bestow. He trusted therefore that they would see justice done to those, who had risked their fortunes in a trade established for centuries, on the faith of Parliament, and which ought not to be condemned on account of the misdeeds of a few wicked, unprincipled and unfeeling individuals. Nothing he said could exalt men, nor approximate them to Heaven so much as exercising their reason, and dispensing judgement and justice, and attending to the dictates of humanity. He relied therefore on the dignity, honour and justice of the House, and placed his constituents in their hands, confident that they would not act inconsistently with their duty or their character.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS assured gentlemen that he had forborne so long from addressing his sentiments, because he dreaded to deliver them. He rose then merely, in his own justification, to state to the Committee, and to the Public, what had been the sentiments he entertained, and which had guided him in the vote he had given, and should again give that night. He had a right to speak his opinion, let it accord or not with that of other gentlemen; and he did declare, that he was as warm a friend to the abolition of the slave trade as his right honourable friend, and that he wished to vote for the question that his right honourable friend adopted, to whose conduct in this matter he gave every degree of credit, but that he dared not vote for the question. He said, he had been deterred from giving his opinion on the question hitherto by various reasons.—The inhabitants of the West-India islands were subjects, it was true, of the Crown of Great Britain, but they were certainly qualified subjects. In what relation were they subjects? Not by compulsion of force, but by the ties of union, and the bond of interests, and the moment the bond was dissolved, there was end of the compact. The West-India colonists under the sanction of Parliament, and the protection of Great Britain, had laid out large sums, and

embarked in the trade we were now about to abolish. He stated, that we had kept a monopoly of the trade to the West Indies in our own hands, and we had a right undoubtedly so to do. His right honourable friend had called for an answer to certain points, but he declared it was totally out of his power to give any, because he dared not enter the lists with him, as he could have no chance in such a controversy. The moment America ceased to belong to us, it was fair for us to say as we had said to the West-India islands, "You shall not be supplied from thence, we will supply you with provisions," and the fact was, we had supplied the islands ever since. He adverted to the arguments of last year, and contended that they differed greatly from those used now. It had then been said, that slaves were imported merely to be worked up, and then were sent away, which occasioned the great disparity of the sexes. He declared he had not voted last year, because he could not side either with those who pressed for an immediate abolition, or with those who opposed abolition altogether, and therefore he had gone away. He was now, he said, for a gradual abolition, because that was, he believed, practicable, and he was convinced, if we could not abolish the trade with the free will of the West-India islands we could not effect an abolition at all. He declared he had not heard a single argument why 1796 was better than 1795 or 1793, and he desired gentlemen not to vote for 1795, merely because they had the other night voted for 1793. He was ready to vote for 1793, because he knew that all that he could do would not prevent the abridgement of what he conceived to be, a proper period of postponement. He said, would to God, that all slavery were abolished, but that he could not extend his hands, they were not long enough to do any good, and he did not believe he had a right to abolish the trade.

Lord CARHAMPTON, after a word or two of exordium, stating why he had reserved his sentiments hitherto on this subject, said, he should be glad to know how long the great and minor orators of that House, for such he con-

sidered them, meant to continue abusing West-India merchants and planters, and the gentlemen of Liverpool and Bristol, concerned in the African trade? Gentlemen might talk of inhumanity, but he did not know what right any gentleman had to do so inhumane a thing, as to inflict a speech of four hours long on a set of innocent, worthy and respectable men. Gentlemen had continued this abuse day after day both in their long and short speeches, some of which would have been equally proper for a House of Commons, a pulpit or a conventicle. If there had not been a back door behind the Speaker's chair for infirm gentlemen to escape, he did believe, they would have died on the spot, as the long speeches reminded him of Bunbury's long story, without suggesting any thing like the same pleasant ideas. These long speeches defamatory of the character of the merchants of Liverpool and Bristol previous to the obvious intention to rob them of their property, he declared, reminded him of the old story of a slave on board a ship, commanded by a Captain who had been successful in life; who had made many harangues in that House, and who now harangued elsewhere. The story was, that when the slave was tied up and going to be flogged, he looked over his shoulder, and seeing his Captain beginning to speak to him, said, "Captain, if you please to flog me, flog me, but if you intend to speech me, speech me, but don't flog me and speech me too." It was very good policy, his Lordship confessed, to deprive men of their character first, before they deprived them of their property, and it resembled the practice that prevailed in this country in the reign of Edward the Fifth, when, previous to the plunder of the Lollards, care was taken to render them odious in the eyes of the people; the same thing was done in still remoter periods of our history, by the Knights Templars, and he remembered a circumstance of that kind in Portugal, where when the inquisition meant to put an innocent girl to death for heresy, or some nonsense of that sort, they endeavoured to poison and prejudice the minds of the populace by cutting off her nose, and exposing her in that disfigured state, insinuating

at the same time, that it was occasioned by a scandalous disorder. One honourable gentleman, he said, had let fall an expression in the warmth of his argument, which in his cooler moments he would doubtless regret; he had said, if the West-India islands will not give up the African slave trade, let them go! Expressions not more dangerous than this had been made in the National Assembly, which occasioned all the massacre and disasters in St. Domingo; a Member had said in debate there, "Let the West-India islands perish, sooner than I will part with my principle;" that expression set fire to the brand, and occasioned all the miseries that took place in the island: and the fact was, the abolitionists, those negro philanthropists, seemed desirous of producing similar effects in our islands, where the negroes wanted but three things, which were, to murder their masters, ravish their women, and drink all their rum. The honourable gentleman, therefore, kindly granted the negroes but one favour, but that was, affording them an opportunity and the means of doing all three. Thus they would get rid of the West-India planters compleatly, they would pay nothing for it, and thus murder would be sanctioned by parliamentary authority. The best way to effect all this, was to occasion insurrections, which the negroes were always meditating, when many of them got together, and the honourable gentleman to enable them to collect in bodies, would forsooth, teach the negroes the Christian religion, and assemble them for that purpose in churches.—He would take no other notice, his Lordship said, of the numerous petitions on the table, than to say that they had been procured from the islands of Scotland, and the mountains of Wales, by the Members of that enlightened society held in the Old Jewry! He declared he was willing to give all the friends of the abolition credit for possessing a larger share of humanity than the rest of that House, for so they told them themselves, but he had the impertinence, for such it had been termed in the House that day, to assert, that just as much justice was due to the merchants of Liver-

pool and Bristol, and the West-India planters, as to the negroes; such audacious and impertinent feelings influenced him in favour of a trade that had been sanctioned by Parliament. Africa had continued to furnish slaves to all the world, from the first period of time, and so she would continue, whether in that little corner of the world they chose, Quixote-like, to undertake the total abolition of the trade or not. That some few wicked men had committed abuses in the conduct of the trade, he neither denied nor would attempt to defend their conduct by any means, but that was not a sufficient reason why the West-India merchants were to be deprived of the means of cultivating their plantations. To borrow a little of school-boys Latin, *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*, the times were changed, and we were changed with them. Formerly Members of Parliament were plain plodding men, who contented themselves with attending to the interests of their constituents, and the welfare of the kingdom; but now, that Assembly sat to deliberate on the interests of the people of Africa; they undertook the care and protection of all the world, but not without squinting a little at the world to come. Would it were possible for some Members of the House of Commons of elder times, or even of the last century, to revisit this world, and be present for a day or so at their debates; the Russells for instance, or Sir John Barnard, whom he should have liked to have heard the honourable gentleman's speech in favour of those delightful people of Africa, described by the honourable gentleman as the prettiest ladies and gentlemen on the face of the globe. — Had Sir John Barnard sat there, he would not have thought himself a Member of the British Parliament, but would have imagined himself a representative of the people of Africa, and that the right honourable gentleman was the Minister of Prince Anamaboe. The honourable gentleman might be mistaken for another Jacob Behmen, one of your fifth monarchy men, and representative of the New Jerusalem; full of methodism and full of enthusiasm; the other honourable gentleman who lifted up his hands to the

skies, and then pointed them to the floor, his eyes rolling all the time as in a phrenzy, seemed as if he were grasping both Heaven and earth at once. In fact, his Lordship said, the House was so changed, that he imagined England was finished; by this term he said, he meant it in the same sense that Capability Browne had used it, who when asked to go over to Ireland to lay out some ground there, had said, he could not go, till he had finished England. He would now give an account of his creed : in the first part, he believed that this Parliament was a wise and prudent Parliament ; and he next believed that the gentlemen of Bristol and Liverpool, were degraded to the situation of the lowest of all possible scoundrels and rascals; and he also believed, that the society in the Old Jewry were the most able and sagacious-set of people, and truly friends of the British constitution, and he declared he was sorry for what he saw advertised in the newspapers, viz. that the funds of this virtuous society were at a very low ebb. He declared he should have been glad to have seen the accounts of the society, because they must be full of curious items. Had they seen those accounts, they should have known what had been the expence of procuring petitions to that House, and what was the price of newspaper defamation and personal scandal. A friend of his had offered him a wager, that if the petition had been drawn in terms to this effect. “ Whereas the
“ white inhabitants of the West-India islands are a lazy set
“ of people, and compel the blackamoors to work for them,
“ they ought to be turned out of the said islands, &c. &c.” (Whoever did not accede to this creed, his Lordship said, had heads of wood and hearts of iron,) more signatures would have been procured. In Oliver Cromwell’s time he remarked, Oliver and his great men were called Parliament drivers. He would not say, that there were Parliament drivers at present, but that there were two honourable gentlemen who could persuade Parliament of any thing they chose. He granted that with respect to the calculations of one right honourable gentleman as to the equality of the births and deaths of the negroes, they were ably made, and

he did not dispute their accuracy; for he could not pretend to controvert them, unless he looked into some books he was not much in the habit of consulting, viz. Aristotle's Master-piece, and Smellie's Midwifery. With regard to the deaths of the negroes in the town of Kingston in Jamaica, their number was not to be wondered at, since Kingston was an unhealthy town. Even London itself had so many deaths from people's leading a dissolute and drunken life, that were it not for the perpetual recruits from the other parts of the kingdom, it would be so depopulated, that we should have grass grow in our streets.

His Lordship said, he had heard the recruits of London from the country stated at fifteen thousand a year. An honourable Member, he declared, who sat next to him the other night during the debate, when the right honourable gentleman made so long a speech on humanity, had whispered him that he was not in earnest, for that lately 150,000 Turks had been dragged into slavery, and had passed the Dardanelles on their way to Asia, and yet the right honourable gentleman was so much in love with the Emperor of the Turks, that he had encouraged him to make more slaves. His honourable friend, his Lordship said, had also whispered him that the other right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) was not sincere; and when he had asked, how his friend made out that? he had said, the right honourable gentleman wanted to form an alliance with the Empress of Russia, the most despotic monarch in all the world, and if ever the right honourable gentleman should once again be the Minister, and he was sure he would make a very able one, he had pledged himself to enter into such an alliance; and as he could not lend the Empress his body as a security for the treaty, he had sent her his head as a pawn. Addressing himself to the Chairman, (Mr. Beaufoy) his Lordship said, "You, Sir, are a family man; if, therefore, you were to see the figure of a man drawing a concealed dagger out of his bosom to murder his master, would not your hair stand on end, and would it not make you stare? Nay more, would you not try to arrest the guilty

“hand of the assassin?” So, in like manner, his Lordship said, he hated robbers, abhorred murderers, and detested slavery; but the House, in its present temper, would not be very fond of him, when he declared that he had property in the islands; but then he had not been a purchaser; his was hereditary property, (descended from an ancestor, formerly a Governor of Jamaica) which was perhaps the most unpopular species of property in times like these; he did not, however, he said, speak against the abolition on that account.

Mr. WILBERFORCE began a reply, with confessing, that he felt himself much obliged to the noble Lord, for having, in his facetious speech, contrived to relieve the dullness of a debate, which certainly, from its nature, gave rise to other passions than that of laughter. The noble Lord’s speech must have been facetious indeed; for were it repeated, he should wear the same honest smile, even where it might be naturally supposed that he should have felt other sensations. What the noble Lord had uttered, was the greatest argument in favour of the question that had yet been urged, inasmuch as the noble Lord had treated with ridicule all those things, which the House had considered as sacred. As to what the noble Lord had said of the business having engaged his attention for years, night and day, it certainly had done so; and with regard to the insinuations of methodism and enthusiasm, he was not afraid to confess what he had never before been obliged to confess, viz. that in his whole conduct respecting that most important subject, he had persevered, because he was anxious to discharge his duty to his Maker, in doing an act of benevolence to his fellow-creatures. The noble Lord had spoken harshly of the Society in the Old Jewry, of which he was certainly a member, and it was his pride to belong to a society, of which some persons were members, whose religious opinions had not drawn on them the partiality of the public; but it had never been urged against them that they were not men of tranquil minds, or men likely to promote the disturbances and animosities of mankind. Mr.

Wilberforce paid a very high compliment to a gentleman at the head of the Society. He denied that he had ever endeavoured to blacken the characters of the West-India planters, or had exaggerated facts in any stage of the evidence. In reply to Mr. Dundas, he went at great length into the population of the islands, Mr. Long, Anderson, and other good authorities, in support of his arguments—that from the equality of the sexes, since the year 1787, the best way to increase the population was to stop importation, as had been successfully done in Carolina and other parts of America. He begged gentlemen to recollect, that fixing the period for 1795 was three years distant; that the islands must have been in a progressive increase since 1788, when they had a sufficient number, and that now the number of males and females was nearly equal. He argued the increase that might accrue in many islands, by changing the cultivation of sugar for cotton. He likewise answered another argument, relative to the danger arising from the disproportion between the blacks and the whites, which certainly must be lessened by stopping future importation. He concluded by an appeal to the justice and humanity of the House.

Mr. FOX assured the Committee, that he would not detain them for so much as five minutes, but that he wished to state to them the idea he entertained of the question as it then stood, and to offer one single argument on it. The question he conceived to lie between 1795 and 1796; that was, whether the slave trade should continue two or three years longer? The point they had to consider therefore was, whether the arguments in favour of 1796 were more weighty than those in favour of 1795. It was, Mr. Fox observed, agreed on all hands, that a tenth of all the Africans put on board the ships upon the coast for the West Indies died in the Middle Passage, and that the average importation was 300,000, consequently they were to suppose that 33,000 were shipped on the coast. Besides these three thousand, a thousand more died in the harbour, and full a third more after they were landed and before they became fit for

labour, fourteen thousand consequently died in one year. — What the Committee therefore had to make up their minds upon, before they voted was, whether they chose, for the sake of continuing the slave trade, to condemn fourteen thousand human beings to death, and sacrifice them to the West-India planters?

Mr. GRANT began with adverting to the logical definitions that had been stated in the course of the several debates on the subject of the slave trade, and said he had no boundary-line to draw between politics and morality: but if he had been told that to be a great Statesman you must be a lax moralist, the short acquaintance that he had with politics had convinced him, that if he entertained any such opinion, he ought to retract it as unjust. If he were asked if he was for an abolition of the slave trade? He should answer, he was for the most speedy and effectual abolition of that trade. If he were again asked, what he meant by speedy and effectual abolition? He should answer a gradual abolition, being convinced that the slave trade being an artificial evil, the result of the vicious administration of legislation, it must be abolished by degrees, or it could not be an effectual abolition. If by an abolition of the trade, gentlemen meant no more than Great Britain relinquishing that part of the trade she enjoyed, Mr. Grant said, he meant something very different indeed. He meant by an abolition of the slave trade, the total abolition of it, so as to ensure the decreasing the sum of human misery. He declared, he had been the other night astonished to hear some very false propositions from so able and experienced a Legislator, as the right honourable gentleman opposite to him. The right honourable gentleman had said, the abolition was a short question of justice, and therefore they were to set aside every collateral consideration, and to do justice. That he must pronounce an erroneous proposition. He had ever conceived that the end of legislation was to do good, and to consider of justice in our means of doing it. Now, there were some occasions on which it was impossible to do so, and there the greatest good must be the object even in violation

of strict justice. He would illustrate his meaning by an instance connected with the immediate subject before them; let them suppose a case of emancipation. Wherever slavery existed, there necessarily existed oppression, and the continuance of slavery was consequently a continuance of oppression. If he had professed to do justice, and a slave were to ask him, how could he account for the use he had in view, in making him a slave; if he meant to do justice, he should not continue him a slave? He should answer, that his means were circumscribed, and that it was true philanthropy, in aiming to effect the greatest good, which the nature of the case would admit. If in consequence of his virtue and self denial, he forbore to do an act, abstractedly, an act of humanity, but which would produce a different consequence, he surely acted rightly; were he to act otherwise, he should not satisfy his conscience, because he should not diminish the misery he wished to relieve. So with the abolition of the slave trade; it was a question of practicability and not merely a question of justice. The question was whether the gradual abolition would effect the object better than the immediate abolition. It appeared to him, that those who contended for an immediate abolition, contended for a mode of abolition the most impracticable, and the least likely to effect its object speedily. If by merely putting the word immediate into a bill for abolishing the slave trade, it would produce the effect, he certainly would vote for such a bill, but every man knew no such effect could be produced by such means. It had been said, that there could be no compromise between justice and inhumanity. So far from it, he declared, they were continually compelled to make those sort of compromises. In our laws there were many points of injustice to be found. A man might as well say, he could not get to the top of the Monument by steps; or that he would travel in a straight line, as that he would make no compromise. Suppose thus travelling, he were to encounter a river? Would he sooner attempt to walk across it, and risk being drowned, than make a compromise, by going a little way about to find a bridge? Were any opposition made to the coercion of the

laws of this country, by the West-India islands, he did not see how we could compel to acquiesce in their operation, and that was surely a material object for consideration. He enlarged upon this as a ground for regulation, and a gradual approach to abolition. There were some arguments, he said, that either from his ignorance of the matter, or from the inferiority of his talents, he could neither refute nor prove to be fallacious; of this sort was the position, that when a man received a blow with a bludgeon, and got a broken head, that it was only an imaginary evil arising from the accidental contact of the man's head and the stick, which both happened to be hard opposing substances. So he feared, if immediate abolition were adopted, the House would find itself in the condition of the philosopher who struck with the bludgeon, and the gentleman in the West Indies, in the case of the man with the broken head. Notwithstanding the mode of argument that his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) had used on this point, the planters were told "you have no need for any more slaves, you can do without them, though you think it necessary yearly to import negroes in great numbers." And his honourable friend had proved, from very ingenious calculations, that they were at present so well supplied with African negroes, that they could do without any more. This argument was fallacious; but a part of the fallacy swam upon the surface. If the negroes were free labourers, and could carry their produce to market, the case would be widely different; but it was to be considered, that they were a property.

Another fallacy was, if Jamaica was one man's property, and all the plantations of it the estate of an individual, the argument of the negroes would apply; because, if the owner complained of bad crops, from the failure of such and such a field; he might be answered, "Why, if that field failed you, the next to it yielded an abundant produce;" but no such answer could be given in the case of an island divided into a variety of estates, belonging to different persons, the crops and negroes on some of which might be extremely defective, although in others the latter might be plentiful, and the former redundant. He compared the argument founded on an average

calculation of the negroes, to the case of a man's taking an account of all the wealth of this kingdom, and dividing it by an average of so much per man. Suppose to such a man, a poor wretch were to apply for charity? Would it be thought any thing but a most absurd answer, if the person applied to were to say "you appear in rags and wretchedness, but according to my average of the wealth of the kingdom, you must be a rich man, and therefore I won't give you a farthing." Or would it be less absurd, if a person in power, who had found by calculation, that 20 felons a session were the number convicted at the Old Bailey, and executed, were to take up the first twenty he found, and have them hanged? Mr. Grant followed up these instances of the ridiculous effect of relying upon averages, with some serious arguments on the danger of too speedy an abolition. He said, if in any measure he was pretty sure of doing a great good, he might perhaps overlook the trifling evil; but when he was going to do that which had many collateral evils inherent in it, common prudence dictated caution; if we precipitately shut the legal door to the importation of African slaves, while the prejudices of the planters were strong in favour of the importation, the natural consequence would be, they would have recourse to other sources of supply, and then greater expence to them, and greater misery to the slaves would be the consequence of their attempt at too sudden and too precipitate an endeavour at abolition. Mr. Grant said, he wished a period to be thought of, that might give the planters due time to prepare for the abolition. There were, he said, two propositions before the House, very opposite in their natures, which he could not blend together, but he thought the proper point might be found between both.—He observed, that the actions and duties of an individual were perfectly different from those of the Legislature. It was enough for an individual to relinquish that which he conceives to be improper, whereas a Legislator was to do merely the greatest quantum of good. An individual need not look at all to the consequences of that which he had to decide upon; whereas a Legislator was bound to act upon a much wider scale, to weigh well, and to consider all the collateral effects of a measure, and to adopt it under the conviction of a moral probability of its answering its end in all its various points and bearings. —Mr.

Grant concluded with declaring, that he should be for a shorter period than the commencement of the year 1800, but not so short a one as that moved by his noble friend.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he did not rise to detain the Committee ; but so much of his honourable and learned friend's ingenious argument had been directed immediately to him, and to what he had said, that he wished extremely, in as short a way as possible, to make two or three observations. His honourable and learned friend had began and ended with declaring, that the duties of an individual, and the duties of a Legislature, were different ; undoubtedly they were so, inasmuch as the scale of consideration of the latter, and the application of a law, was wider and more general than that of any individual act of the former. But his honourable friend's argument, if the Committee would but attend to the different parts of it, would be found to be best illustrated by his instances. He admitted that his honourable friend had rightly called the slave trade an artificial evil, arising out of a vicious administration of legislation, and it shewed that by a breach of justice, and by one strong violation of every principle of justice, they had put men into a situation, in which they were neither able to preserve order, nor promote their own felicity. His honourable friend possessed so correct an understanding, that he was sure he would not urge an argument that was not complete in all its parts. His honourable friend had recommended it to them to leave that to the planters to execute, which they were known to be prejudiced against, whereas he was for doing what was in their own power to effect, and leave that part of the plan only to the planters, the executing of which belonged properly to their Houses of Assembly, and carried with it its own necessity of being properly executed by those to whose hands it was entrusted, as they had a material interest in its full effect. The honourable gentleman had talked of other sources of supply being looked to by the West-India colonies for negroes ; in answer to which, first, he said, that as it was acknowledged that they had a power over their own colonies, and over their own shipping, as he had before proved, he would not therefore again detain the Committee, by arguing it minutely. He mentioned the impracticability of smuggling negroes being carried on for any time successfully ; and with re-

gard to the trade not being abolished in 1795, he said, if that were not complied with, from any argument that he had heard, he saw no reason why it should not be continued for years and years, as well as lengthened beyond 1785. He took notice of the argument of Mr. Grant, relative to the blow being merely ideal, which broke a man's head, and opposed it to the sufferings of the Africans, when seized on the coasts of their own country. The arguments of his honourable friend might be urged by the planters, and were certainly ingenious; but upon the argument of flesh and blood, it must be evident to every man, who would not wish a wilful obstinacy, or shut his eyes to truth and reason, that such arguments gave no conviction to the Committee, that the trade should continue any longer. It had been said by his honourable friend, that every plantation was not in the same prosperous state; it was true, however, and appeared from the evidence, that no one was in a state of want, and many in a state of great prosperity. With regard to the arguments founded on the average wealth of this country; that as every man was upon the average comparison rich, a poor beggar was not to be relieved; if that argument, were to be pushed to its extent, it might be carried to a degree of the extremest ridicule; as to the idea, that because twenty were the number of the convictions each session at the Old Bailey, it would be fair to seize the first twenty they met, he would not treat those who were convicted at the Old Bailey, as the Africans were treated, and though in a country like this, the most prosperous on the average, and the most prosperous among its various ranks of society, there might be some classes living in a style of poverty in a land of plenty; that argument was not a fair one, but the honourable gentleman used the prejudices of the planters for arguments. The West-India planters would not particularly object to twenty years, but to the abolition itself, as they had had abundant time to settle the question; and as to their being taken by surprise, that was impossible, as the question of abolition had become a matter of consideration among them for four years past. So convinced was he of the force of their case, that were it possible for a moment to lay dead all the feelings that ought on such a subject to rouse the heart of human beings, and were he capable of coldly stating it in a dry way as a philosopher in a speculative closet,

he was sure the statement of it must as much convince the understandings of all who listened to him, as the putting it with the warmth, that was almost inseparable from the bare looking at it, must effect and impress the feelings. His honourable friend had said, " You tell them there was no need for farther importation, though you are yearly importing thousands." In answer to this he had proved undeniably, that farther importation was unnecessary, and no attempt had been made by the West-India merchants and planters to controvert his statement on that head. He concluded a very animated and able reply, with observing, that his honourable friend had answered himself, and refuted his distinction between the duty of an individual and the duty of a Legislator, by declaring indefinitely that he should vote for some period between the year 1800 and 1795, and that to adopt his doctrine would be to defeat their scheme, which was equal to its end, and to entrust its execution to others, whose interest it was to occasion its failure, whereas they ought to consider that all they gave up would be contributing to the strengthening the adverse side of the question.

Mr. GRANT, said a few words in explanation.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL said, as he had never troubled the House before on the subject, he begged leave to state his sentiments. What had passed, had in his mind reduced the argument in debate to a very narrow compass. He had ever been for an abolition of the slave trade. A right honourable gentleman had called upon the Members for counties in particular to declare their sentiments; he therefore took that opportunity of saying, that his own sentiments; and those of almost the whole of the inhabitants of the county, which he had the honour to represent, were in favour of a gradual abolition. He should oppose the abolition's taken place in 1795, and with that view, he should propose the year 1796, as an amendment.

The Committee divided;

For abolition in 1795, 121; Against it, 161. Majority 40.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL having proposed 1796 as the period of abolition,

Mr. FOX said, if the amendment now proposed should be rejected, and a bill brought in to abolish the trade in 1800, he

should oppose it, as pretending to abolish what it meant in fact to continue. After the injustice and inhumanity of the trade had been proved and admitted, nothing that deserved the name of an argument had been adduced to shew that its abolition would be more practicable in 1800 than at present. He felt little anxiety for the success of the amendment now moved, although he was willing to accede to it, because he was convinced that by the same exertions in another session of Parliament, they should obtain the abolition at least as early as 1796.

Mr. DUNDAS repeated some of his former arguments in support of his own plan, and said, that as the right honourable gentleman had brought himself to agree to four years instead of three, might not those who contended at first for ten years, be, on better consideration, brought to agree to a shorter period?

Mr. Alderman WATSON professed himself a friend to the abolition, but was convinced that a reasonable time must be given to bring it about.

The SPEAKER supported the amendment, but said, that for so short a period he should oppose duties and restrictions on the importation.

Lord SHEFFIELD said, that if a bill was passed for abolishing the trade in 1796, he should, next session, move the repeal of that bill.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL asked if Mr. Chancellor Pitt and Mr. Fox would, in a future stage, endeavour to shorten the period, if 1796 should be then carried?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that considering 1796 as the earliest period that it was now practicable to obtain, he should make no farther attempt, if that were carried.

Mr. FOX said there were many regulations proposed in the original propositions; and on the extent to which these were adopted, in a bill for abolishing the trade in 1796, would his acquiescence depend.

Mr. MARTIN entreated gentlemen to consider what Mr. Fox had said of condemning 14,000 Africans to death, by each additional year for which they continued the trade, and then lay their heads on their pillows with what quiet of conscience they could,

The Committee divided ;

For the abolition in 1796, 151 ; Against it, 132. Majority 19.

Mr. DUNDAS then said, that as the gentlemen on the other side had now altered his plan, so as to make it their own, he begged leave to return them the task, which they had before transferred to him, of forming regulations and bringing in a bill.

This gave rise to a conversation, the result of which we understood to be that Mr. Dundas agreed to give his assistance in forming regulations and preparing a bill on the period of abolition adopted by the Committee.

A second conversation took place on the day on which the Committee should sit again ; and the chairman reported progress without fixing a day.

The House adjourned.

Monday, 30th April.

Mr. SHERIDAN presented a petition on the behalf of the burghesses of the Royal boroughs of Scotland, stating the progress of their case before the House, referring to their petition formerly presented to the House, and now praying to be heard by their counsel at the bar of the House, to prove the existence of the grievances complained of, and stating that they were perfectly ready for that purpose.

Mr. DUNDAS objected to the receiving of the petition, on account of the informality of the mode proposed, for that it referred to a former petition, and also the lateness of the session ; and also, that if such a petition should be heard at all, the burghesses who do not complain, and those who are charged with having committed abuses, should have notice of this proceeding, for which there was no time in the present session.

Mr. FOX reprobated the doctrine of the right honourable Secretary, and maintained the propriety of the present application. The House had refused to grant a Committee to inquire whether the abuses complained of did or did not exist. He lamented the decision very much, but at present, there was no remedy. The next best step the burghesses could take, they had taken, namely, that of asking leave to prove that they had not

asserted any thing to that House that was not true; and that they did not impertinently trouble the House, and call for a remedy where there was no grievance. They had taken the very step that he should have advised them, had they done him the honour of asking his advice; and the House would act unjustly if it refused to grant what they now solicited. There appeared to him something miserable in the quibbling of the right honourable Secretary on this subject. How were the Members of that House to know whether it was too late in the session or not, that they were to take, on the word of a Minister, who might use this observation as a mere shift to get rid of a subject, when it was his view to defeat the claims of justice. He warned him and the House to take care how they refused to hear subjects who complained of grievances, and who thus so peaceably asked what they were so obviously entitled to, namely, a right of being heard: those stubborn refusals, supported upon paltry tricks, and quibbles, would not always be sufficient to defeat the purposes of justice.

Mr. Chancellor PITT thought there were clear grounds for rejecting this petition, and those were founded on the uniform practice of the House—namely, that the petition had a public object expressed by it, and its prayer went to ask the form of a private one, that of being heard by counsel, he therefore found himself bound to vote against the receiving of it.

Mr. SHERIDAN derided the petty shifts made use of to keep justice aloof from the present case. He was denied the Committee to inquire, because he was told, that first he should establish the existence of some grievances before the House could think of giving its time to the subject; and that when he was going to do in the most regular way, he was told he should not be heard at all. The truth was, there was but one objection, and one wish in the mind of the right honourable gentleman who opposed this. An objection to the complaints because they were true, and a wish to defeat the application, because it was just. However, in his endeavours to conceal the subject from the public view, he should not succeed, for although defeated so often by influence, he should still persist until he should accomplish his object; he should move, on some day in the present session, a string of resolutions that would be descriptive of the state of these burghs, the truth of which the

right honourable gentleman would not dare to combat. He had told him on a former day, he should be carefully watched here, and faithfully reported in Scotland, and he on that occasion had been pleased to talk of his popularity & since that time he had received letters from different parts, and from the most enlightened, as well as the most respectable persons in Scotland, and they spoke of the right honourable Secretary in terms not very flattering to his popularity.

Mr. DUNDAS said, he should certainly dare oppose any thing that appeared to him to have for its object the changing of the form of the constitution of the boroughs of Scotland. With regard to his popularity—

The SPEAKER called to order—and then gave his sentiments on the point of practice with regard to petitions. Generally speaking, none but private petitions from individuals were supported by Counsel at the bar. But there were exceptions to this, according to circumstances. The East-India Company, who held rights by charter, had been heard by Counsel on public bills. The matter was rather a difficulty with him, and he left it to the House to determine on it.

The question was then put, that the petition be received, and passed in the negative.

Mr. GREY rose, in order, he said, to give notice to the House, of a motion which in the course of the next session he should have the honour to submit to their consideration, the object of which was a reform of the representation of the people. On a subject of such importance, as that to which his motion related, he could not content himself with merely stating his notice, but would trouble the House by saying a few words upon it. The necessity of such reform had, he observed, been often allowed and asserted by eminent men both in that and the other House of Parliament: it had been acknowledged by the right honourable gentleman over the way (Mr. Pitt) and by his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox); from the influence of different interests, however, every attempt to introduce a reform had hitherto proved unsuccessful. That the proposition had been relinquished by the right honourable gentleman, which had never since been brought forward, he rather attributed to its failure of success on former occasions, than to any change of opinion on the subject. He meant not to throw im-

putations on any gentleman, or to censure them for a desertion of the cause which he supported; so far from entertaining such an idea, he hoped and trusted he should find them forward friends and advocates of the proposition. He was fully satisfied and completely convinced that since the subject had been last brought forward a considerable change had taken place in the minds of the people, and that the necessity of a reform was at present pretty generally acknowledged. Abuses had been permitted to creep into the constitution through neglect, or had been introduced into it by corruption, and those abuses were of a nature so dangerous, that they threatened the very existence of the constitution itself; a reform, therefore, he was persuaded, was the only mode of preserving it from rapid decay, and speedy demolition, and on that measure, the security of the country, and the continuance of its freedom, depended. The terms were critical, and the minds of the people agitated; it was to do away every cause of complaint, and to preserve the peace of the Public and the general tranquillity, that he wished a reform to take place in the representation.— Within the two last years the privileges of that House had been curtailed and infringed in a greater degree, than in any preceding period of equal duration. In his mind it was a point of the utmost importance that the House should enjoy the good opinion of the Public, and possess their confidence as a true representation of the people. If the House was not considered as the true representatives of the people, the greatest evils were to be feared, the worst of dangers to be apprehended. The loss of that character might produce all the miseries of civil commotion, with which, God forbid that this nation should ever be afflicted. If there were those who wished to promote confusion and excite mischief, he exceedingly regretted it: he disclaimed all connection with such persons, and must ever reprobate their conduct. He was convinced, however, that the evils which threatened the constitution, and endangered its safety, could only be corrected by a timely and temperate reform, and in his mind the measure demanded the serious consideration of every friend to his country, and would be found deserving of his support. He trusted, therefore, that between the present day, and that on which he should bring forward the proposition, gentlemen would weigh well the question, and

give it their most deliberative attention ; and in that interval he hoped, that the sentiments of the people on the subject would be fully ascertained *.

* *The following is a Copy of the Declaration and Address of the Society instituted for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform :*

Freemasons Tavern, 26th April, 1792.

At a General Meeting of the Society established on the 11th instant, under the title of THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, WILLIAM HENRY LAMBTON, Esq. in the Chair,

Received a Report from the Committee appointed by the Resolution of the 19th instant, consisting of the following persons :

William Baker, Esq. M. P. Chairman.
 Charles Grey, Esq. M. P.
 Samuel Whitbread, jun. Esq. M. P.
 John Wharton, Esq. M. P.
 Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. M. P.
 Philip Francis, Esq. M. P.
 Hon. Thomas Maitland, M. P.
 William Henry Lambton, Esq. M. P.
 George Rous, Esq.
 John Godfrey, Esq.
 William Cuninghame, Esq.
 James Mackintosh, Esq.

Read a draught of an Address to the People of Great Britain, contained in the Report of the Committee.

Resolved unanimously, That the said Address is approved of and adopted by this Meeting.

Resolved unanimously, That the Declaration already agreed on, together with the said Address, be printed and published, with the names of the subscribing members, and that the Committee be instructed to print and publish the same.

DECLARATION.

A number of persons having seriously reviewed and considered the actual situation of public affairs, and state of the kingdom, and having communicated to each other their opinions on these subjects, have agreed and determined to institute a Society, for the purpose of proposing to Parliament, and to the Country, and of promoting, to the utmost of their power, the following constitutional objects, making the preservation of the constitution, on its true principles, the foundation of all their proceedings.

First.—To restore the freedom of election, and a more equal representation of the People in Parliament.

Secondly.—To secure to the People a more frequent exercise of their right of electing their representatives.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he believed it was not strictly regular to enter into any observations upon a mere notice of a motion; and therefore he was under the correction of the Chair, whether or not he should articulate a syllable.—[Go

The persons, who have signed their names to this agreement, think that these two fundamental measures will furnish the power and the means of correcting the abuses, which appear to them to have arisen from a neglect of the acknowledged principles of the constitution, and of accomplishing those subordinate objects of reform, which they deem to be essential to the liberties of the people, and to the good government of the kingdom.

Signed by

Charles Grey, Esq. M. P.	Mr. Serjeant Bond.
Hon. Thomas Maitland, M. P.	William Lushington, Esq.
George Rous, Esq.	Right hon. Lord J. Russell, M. P.
William Cuninghame, Esq.	Samuel Rogers, Esq.
John Tweddell, Esq.	T. C. Curwen, Esq. M. P.
Earl of Lauderdale.	Peregrine Dealtry, Esq.
Nicolls Raynsford, Esq.	Richard B. Sheridan, Esq. M. P.
James Mackintosh, Esq.	William Fullarton, Esq.
Thomas Christie, Esq.	Norman Macleod, Esq. M. P.
Malcolm Laing, Esq.	James Losh, Esq.
Right hon. Lord Kinnaird,	John Sawbridge, Ald. Esq. M. P.
James Archdekin, Esq.	Richard Weld, Esq.
William Harwood, Esq.	John Claridge, Esq.
David Godfrey, Esq.	John Wharton, Esq. M. P.
Higgins Eden, Esq.	James Martin, Esq. M. P.
Philip Francis, Esq. M. P.	William Smith, Esq. M. P.
Charles Goring, Esq.	John Scott, Esq. M. P.
John Hurford Stone, Esq.	Sir Bellingham Graham, Bart.
W. H. Lambton, Esq. M. P.	George Byng, Esq. M. P.
John Godfrey, Esq.	John Cartwright, Esq.
George Tierney, Esq.	Jer. Batley, Esq.
Arthur Piggot, Esq.	Ralph Carr, jun. Esq.
J. B. Church, Esq. M. P.	Ralph Milbank, Esq. M. P.
Gilbert Ironside, Esq.	Henry Howard, Esq.
T. B. Hollis, Esq.	Sir J. W. S. Gardiner, Bart.
William Baker, Esq. M. P.	B. E. Howard, Esq.
Sam. Whitbread, jun. Esq. M. P.	E. B. Clive, Esq.
Dudley North, Esq. M. P.	Henry Howard, Esq. M. P.
Sir John Throckmorton, Bart.	John Leach, Esq.
John Courtenay, Esq. M. P.	John Nichols, Esq.
M. A. Taylor, Esq. M. P.	Joseph Richardson, Esq.
William Breton, Esq.	John Towgood, Esq.
Thomas Rogers, Esq.	William Chisholm, Esq.
Hon. Thomas Erskine, M. P.	John Fazakerly, Esq.
R. Knight, Esq.	Richard S. Milnes, Esq. M. P.
Thomas Thompson, Esq. M. P.	Samuel Shore, Esq.
Colonel Tarleton, M. P.	Samuel Shore, jun. Esq.
H. Howorth, Esq.	Charles Warren, Esq.

on! Go on! was echoed, and re-echoed, from different parts of the House.]—He then proceeded. If ever there was an occasion, he said, in which the mind of every man, who had any feeling for the present, or hope for the future, happiness of

Long Kingfman, Esq.
Edward Jer. Curteis, Esq.
Samuel Long, Esq. M. P.
Henry Swann, Esq.
T. B. Rous, Esq.
D. O'Bryen, Esq.
J. Lodge Batley, Esq.
James West, Esq.
Richard Carpenter Smith, Esq.
W. Powlett Powlett, Esq. M. P.
George Livius, Esq.
Right hon. Lord Daer.

Hon. John Douglas.
Right hon. Lord Edw. Fitzgerald
Rev. Dr. Kippis.
James Jacque, Esq.
Francis Love Beckford, Esq.
Adam Walker, Esq.
Richard Sharp, Esq.
Rev. Dr. Joseph Towers.
John Clerk, Esq.
Thomas Bell, Esq.
John Wilfon, Esq.
Andrew Stirling, Esq.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

NO man, who is not ready to express his concurrence in our principles, by signing the Declaration, can be admitted into our Society. The objects of it, as we conceive, are of a nature at all times fit to be pursued and recommended to the country. At different periods they have heretofore been avowed and supported by the highest authorities in this kingdom; by eminent individuals, and considerable bodies of men; by Mr. Locke and Judge Blackstone; by the late Earl of Chatham, and Sir George Savile; by the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox; by petitions from several counties, and by repeated declarations from the city of London.

In appealing to the avowed opinions of men of established reputation, or of distinguished rank in their country, we do not mean to strengthen the reason, or enforce the necessity of the measure we propose, so much as to obviate all personal imputations, which the enemies of the cause will be ready to throw upon those who support it. It is not that, on our own account, we dread the effect, or regard the impression, which such imputations may produce; but we think it material to the credit and success of our proceedings, to shew, that we are not aiming at reforms unthought of by wise and virtuous men: that our opinions neither possess the advantage, nor are liable to the objection of novelty; and that we cannot be accused or suspected of factious purposes, or dangerous designs, without extending the same accusation or suspicion to the motives of men, whose situation and property, independent of their character, principles, and abilities, have given them a most important stake in the peace and good government of the kingdom.

Convinced by our own reflections, by experience, and by authority, that the thing we propose to do, is fit to be done, we have, with equal deliberation, weighed the reasons that may recommend, or be objected to the present time, as the most or least proper for bringing it forward. On this point, we have no address to make to the deter-

this country, should be interested, the present was the time for its exertion. The present was the time in which the whole House should lose sight of form in the regulation of debate, and apply at once to the substance of the subject. Nothing

mined enemies of a reform of every kind. Their objection, whether valid or not, is to the substance of the measure, and cannot be abated by circumstances. To those, who concur generally in the principle, but who may be inclined, by particular reasons, to defer the attempt, we seriously wish to submit the following considerations:—That admitting this to be a season of general tranquillity in the country, it is, on that account, the more proper for temperate reflection, and prudent exertions to accomplish any necessary improvement; it is the time when practical measures for that purpose are most likely to be adopted with discretion and pursued with moderation. If we are persuaded to wait for other times, of a different complexion, for times of public complaint, or general discontent, we shall then be told, that general remedies are not fit to be proposed in the moment of particular disorder, and that it is our duty to wait for the return of quiet days, unless we mean to create or increase confusion in the country. The result of this dilemma, if it be suffered to prevail, is pure and absolute inactivity at present, and for ever. On the other hand, if it be true, as we are convinced it is, that, in this general appearance of tranquillity, there is some mixture of discontent, as well as of strong and well-grounded opinion, on the subject of abuses in the Government, and corruptions of the Constitution, we wish it to be considered by men, whose judgement has been formed or enlightened by experience, and whose actions are most likely to be directed by prudence, whether, in taking proper measures to remove the cause and objects of such discontent and opinion, the choice of the time be not a material part of the measure; and whether the earliest time that can be taken, for preventing the increase of an existing evil, be not the safest and the best?

The example and situation of another kingdom, are held out to deter us from innovations of any kind. We say, that the reforms we have in view, are not innovations. Our intention is, not to change, but to restore; not to displace, but to re-instate the Constitution upon its true principles and original ground. In the conduct of persons most likely to reproach us with a spirit of innovation, we see a solid ground for retorting the imputation. Their professions of admiration of the beauty and of zeal for the security of the Constitution, appear to us too lavish to be sincere, especially when compared with those practical violations, with which they suffer this beautiful system to be invaded, and to which they never refuse to give their concurrence. They will not innovate, but they are no enemies to gradual decay; as if the changes insensibly produced by time, and nourished by neglect, were not in effect the most dangerous innovations. But what security have we, that the dispositions of such men are not something worse than passive? How are we assured that, in praising the Constitution, their intention is not to adorn a victim, which they wish to sacrifice, or to flatter the beauty they are endeavouring to cor-

could be said, nothing could be whispered, upon this subject, at this time, that did not involve questions of the most extensive, the most serious, the most lasting importance to the people of this country, to the very being of the State. He

rupt? Let their intention be what it may, we answer their accusation in the words of one of the wisest of mankind*: "That Time is the
 " greatest innovator; and if time of course alter things to the worse,
 " and if wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what
 " shall be the end?"

By the reform proposed by Lord Chatham†, he declared in the House of Lords, that he meant *to infuse a portion of new health into the Constitution*. The Duke of Richmond has declared‡, that "his reasons in favour of a parliamentary reform were formed on the experience of twenty-six years, which, whether in or out of Government, had equally convinced him, that the restoration of a genuine House of Commons, by a renovation of the rights of the people, was the only remedy against that system of corruption, which had brought the nation to disgrace and poverty, and threatened it with the loss of liberty."

Other authorities, in favour of a parliamentary reform, as direct and explicit as these, might be quoted in abundance. The Public is possessed of them. We rather wish to encounter, because we are sure we can efface, in every rational mind, the impression, which may have been made by a view of those events which have attended a total change in the constitution of France. We deny the existence of any resemblance whatever between the cases of the two kingdoms; and we utterly disclaim the necessity of resorting to similar remedies.—We do not believe that, at this day, an absolute avowed despotism, in the hands of the executive power, would be endured in this country. But who can say, to what conclusion the silent unresisted operation of abuses, incessantly acting, and constantly increasing, may lead us hereafter; what habits it may gradually create; what power it may finally establish? The abuses in the government of France were suffered to gather and accumulate, until nothing but an eruption could put an end to them. The discontent of the people was converted into despair. Preventive remedies were either not thought of in time, or were not proposed until it was too late to apply them with effect. The subversion of the ancient government ensued. The inference from this comparison is at once so powerful and so obvious, that we know not by what argument to illustrate or enforce it. We mean to avert for ever from our country the calamities inseparable from such convulsions. If there be, as it is said, in any part of this kingdom, a disposition to promote confusion, or even to arrive at improvement by unconstitutional and irregular courses, we hold ourselves as strictly pledged to resist that disposition, wherever it may appear, as to pursue our own objects by unexceptionable methods. If, on the contrary, it be true, that the mass of the people are satisfied with the present state of things, or indifferent about it; if they approve of the representation as it stands, the form of election, and the duration of the

* Lord Bacon.

† Jan. 22, 1770.

Jan. 17, 1783.

had other motives, he confessed, besides the general importance of the subject, to say a few words now upon it. It was a question on which he had thought attentively. He was unwilling to weary the House with many observations upon his own

trust; or if, condemning these things, they are determined, from indolence or despair, not to attempt to correct them; then indeed the efforts of individuals may be ineffectual, but they cannot be injurious to the peace of the community. If the spirit of the constitution be dead in the hearts of the people, no human industry can revive it.—To affirm, that extensive mischief may be done by a statement of facts or arguments, which make no general impression on the public mind, is a proposition that contradicts itself, and requires no other refutation. We trust it will be proved by experiment, that these inconsistent assertions are equally unfounded, and that the people of this country are no more disposed to submit to abuses without complaint, than to look for redress in any proceedings repugnant to the laws, or unwarranted by the constitution. Between anarchy and despotism, speaking for ourselves, we have no choice to make; we have no preference to give. We neither admit the necessity, nor can we endure the idea of resorting to either of these extremities as a refuge from the other. The course we are determined to pursue, is equally distant from both.

Finally, we assert, that it must be blindness not to see, and treachery not to acknowledge,

That “* the instruments of power are not perhaps so open and avowed as they formerly were, and therefore are the less liable to jealous and invidious reflections; but they are not the weaker upon that account. In short, our national debts and taxes have, in their natural consequences, thrown such a weight of power into the executive scale of Government, as we cannot think was intended by our patriot ancestors, who gloriously struggled for the abolition of the then formidable parts of the prerogative, and by an unaccountable want of foresight, established this system in their stead.” Our general object is to recover and preserve the true balance of the constitution.

These are the principles of our Association, and, on our steady adherence to them, we look with a just confidence to the approbation and support of the people in the prosecution of our object. A measure, so likely to be opposed by the united strength of various interests, can never succeed, but by the declared and hearty concurrence of the nation.

Resolved unanimously,

That a motion be made in the House of Commons, at an early period in the next session of Parliament, for introducing a parliamentary reform.

* Blackstone.

conduct, or what seemed not exactly to correspond with what he had professed in the earliest part of his public character; because he was convinced that the question to be brought forward on this subject, would involve something more than the

Resolved unanimously,

That Charles Grey, Esq. be requested to make, and the Hon. Thomas Erskine to second, the above motion.

Signed, by the unanimous order of the Meeting,

W. H. LAMPTON, Chairman.

At a Meeting of the Society of the FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, held at the Freemasons Tavern, on Saturday, May 5, 1792, WILLIAM BAKER, Esq. M. P. in the Chair. The Right Hon. Lord JOHN RUSSELL, M. P. Deputy Chairman.

Mr. Baker, from the Committee, brought up the following Resolutions, which were agreed to by the Society :

Resolved, That it appears to this Meeting, that a formal notice having been given in the House of Commons, on Monday the 30th of April, by Charles Grey, Esq. of his intention to bring forward, at an early period in the next session of Parliament, a motion for a parliamentary reform, occasion has since been taken to throw out and propagate a variety of aspersions, equally groundless in substance, and opprobrious in terms, against the motives, objects, and proceedings of this Association.

Resolved, That although we are of opinion that the true objects of our institution have been clearly defined, and distinctly expressed in our Declaration and Address, it may nevertheless be adviseable to encounter and repel the calumnies, with which we have been attacked, by the following observations, which we willingly submit to the cool and impartial judgement of our country.

That whereas it is objected generally by persons, who have not yet ventured to deny the necessity of a reform in the actual representation of the people, at some proper but undetermined period, that the time we have taken, and the mode we have adopted, for bringing forward the measure, are likely to produce the most dangerous consequences in the country; we say that the arguments, which determined us in the choice of the time, have been fully stated in our Address, but have been no where answered, nor at all fairly considered. This objection is urged and relied on, as if it had not been foreseen and anticipated. We must content ourselves, therefore, with re-asserting, that a season of quiet and prosperity is the most proper for mild and temperate discussion, as well as for taking moderate and reasonable securities for the future; and that the choice of such a time is alone sufficient to clear us of any intention to promote popular discontent. But we

character, the fortune, the connection, the liberty, or the life of any individual. It might affect the peace and tranquillity which, under the favour of Providence, this country had, for a long time, enjoyed, in a superior degree, perhaps, to any

understand it has been particularly asserted, that the present time is improper, because no specific grievance exists; whereas the period, when former proposals for reform were offered to Parliament, was perfectly proper, because a grievance did then subsist in the American war; the origin, the continuance, and the calamities of which were attributed to, or supposed to be connected with, the imperfect and corrupted state of the representation of the people in Parliament.

We do not admit, that the immediate non-existence of grievances, which the acknowledged corruption of the institution is at all times equally capable of producing, is any objection against taking securities to prevent the return of such grievances. But we positively affirm, that, in fact, a case has lately occurred, which, on the very principles of the objection, establishes the necessity of a reform in the constitution of the House of Commons. We mean the late armament intended to act against Russia, which might have involved the nation in a most impolitic and ruinous war; and to which a large majority of the House of Commons gave their support, in direct contradiction to the real interests, and to the acknowledged sense of the people.— With respect to the mode of our proceeding, we conceive, that the objections urged against it, ought to have been as precise, as specific, as the reasons we have assigned in support of it. Instead of comparing the principles, we profess with those of the constitution; instead of canvassing the terms of our declaration, and proving a contradiction between our professions and our conduct, it is thought fit to load us with a loose, unsupported, general charge, expressed in the language of reproach, not of argument; of uniting with certain bodies of men, whose principles and practice, as far as they appear to be such as they are represented, we have not only disclaimed in the strongest terms, but have declared, that we are determined to resist to the utmost of our ability. Not a single proposition, not one sentence, nor even a word in the Declaration and Address, which we have submitted to the Public, has been pointed out as liable to an objection of any kind. We do believe, that the minds of men are every day more and more enlightened on the subject of the constitution and government of their country, as well as more attentive to it, than in former times. That disposition has not been created by any efforts of ours. We are of opinion, that it exists very generally through this kingdom. Is it useful to discourage, is it possible to suppress it? We earnestly recommend it to those, who wish well to the peace of the kingdom, to consider seriously, whether, under the acknowledged existence of abuses, a declared resistance to every proposal for amendment may not, in the event, prove favourable to the views of men whose principles are destructive of all good government, and wholly irreconcilable with the object of our Association.

Before the motion, to which one of our members, in compliance with the request of the Society, has pledged himself, can be made,

part of the habitable globe. It might affect us, who, from the time of general darkness and bondage to the present hour, had sat quietly, perceiving other Powers struggling with tyranny and oppression, while we enjoyed our freedom ; it might

we hope the sense of the country will be distinctly expressed. If, after having done every thing in our power to obtain the reform, which we think wanting, the country shall appear to be satisfied with the present state of representation, we must and shall submit : if, on the contrary, the propriety of our measures shall appear to be generally felt and acknowledged, we shall hold ourselves bound to use every legal and constitutional means of effecting a timely and temperate reform ; the only one which we can propose, and the only one to which we will give our concurrence. Whenever that object is obtained, our Association is at an end. We go no farther. The people then will possess a more perfect organ to express their sentiments, and a power to correct those abuses, which we call subordinate, and which we believe to proceed principally from the present depraved state of the representation of the people in Parliament.

Resolved, That the above resolutions, proposed by the Committee, be agreed to, and adopted by the Society, and that the Committee be intrusted to publish the same.

Signed by order of the Committee,

WILLIAM BAKER, M. P. Chairman,

Freemason's Tavern, Saturday, June 9, 1792.

At a General Meeting of the Society of THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, held this day, John Wharton, Esq. M. P. in the chair,

The following letter, addressed to the Chairman of this Society, was read ;

“ Monday noon, June 4, 1792.

“ SIR,

“ After the strong Declaration and Protest, which some of us thought it our duty to make, at the meeting on the 19th of May, and in which we all heartily concurred, we might perhaps have been justified in adopting that line of conduct, which we now find ourselves bound to pursue, immediately on the appearance of the paper from the Society for Constitutional Information, on the 25th of that month, if we had not been anxious, in that moment of critical expectation, to check every symptom of disunion among ourselves, in the sanguine hope, that at the meeting on Saturday last, the most decisive measures might have been taken to obviate the fatal effects of that publication.

“ You, Sir, will recollect the weighty objections which were made to Mr. Cooper's admission as a Member of the Association, the spe-

even bring us into anarchy and confusion worse, if possible, than if we had to contend with despotism itself. He thought the country should know what the opinions of public men were upon the subject now before them, and how they felt at this mo-

cific ground of those objections, and the declared resolution of some of us to renounce our connection with the Association on that very account: And, as we cannot distinguish between the appointment of that gentleman to correspond with the Jacobins at Paris, and the express avowal of a similar correspondence actually carried on under the hand and signature of Mr. Cartwright, we are at a loss to conceive upon what principle the one should have ceased to belong to the Association, which did not equally demand the exclusion of the other.

" No step of this sort appears to have been taken: Retaining the same opinion of the propriety of a parliamentary reform, agreeably to those principles which alone induced us to engage in the Association, and which we have repeatedly declared to the Public, we feel what is due to our own consistency of conduct; and under this impression, we think it incumbent on us to withdraw our names from a Society, which, by continuing such connections, will, in our opinion, frustrate the attainment of those very objects, for which alone the Association was instituted, and to which alone its attention ought to be directed.

" We have the honour to be,

" Sir,

" Your most obedient,

" and humble servants,

(Signed)

" JOHN RUSSELL,

" WILLIAM BAKER,

" J. C. CURWIN,

" DUDLEY NORTH,

" J. COURTENAY.

" To the Chairman of the
Association for obtaining a
Parliamentary Reform."

Resolved unanimously,

That if it had occurred to any Member of this Association, that Major Cartwright ought to have been excluded on Saturday last, it would have been an act of public duty in such Member to have brought forward a Motion for that purpose.

Resolved unanimously,

That no one of the gentlemen who have assigned the continuance of Major Cartwright in the Society, as their sole reason for quitting it, did attend at the general meeting on Saturday last.

Resolved unanimously,

That it does not appear upon what reasonable ground the five gentlemen, who have now quitted the Association, could have entertained a " sanguine hope" that measures, which even they did not think fit to recommend, should have been proposed by others in their absence.

ment. He confessed they had a peculiar right to know from him his opinion on the subject of parliamentary reform. He could have wished, that a subject of this immense importance had been brought forward at a time when he was personally more able to take an active part in a debate than at present, but above all, on a day on which the House had no other matter

Resolved unanimously,

That at the meeting of the 19th of May, the name of Mr. Cooper was voluntarily withdrawn by the gentleman who had originally proposed him, before any objection had been publicly made, or any thing whatever had been said in the Society upon the subject.

Resolved unanimously,

That this Society have entered into no connections whatsoever, inconsistent with their declared principles; but, on the contrary, have publicly declined all intercourse with another Society, whose views and objects appeared to them irreconcilable with the real interests of the people, and the genuine principles of the constitution.

Resolved unanimously,

That if this Society had in any instance contradicted, or departed from the declared principles and objects of their institution, or deviated from the mode which was originally adopted for obtaining them, individuals might then be justified in withdrawing from it.

Resolved unanimously,

That no act, proceeding, or resolution of the Association, has been, or can be, pointed out, in which they have contradicted or departed from the declared principles and objects of their institution, or deviated from the mode which was originally adopted for obtaining them.

Resolved unanimously,

That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of Lord John Russell from the books of this Society.

Resolved unanimously,

That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of William Baker, Esq. from the books of this Society.

Resolved unanimously,

That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of John Christian Curwen, Esq. from the books of this Society.

Resolved unanimously,

That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of Dudley North, Esq. from the books of this Society.

Resolved unanimously,

That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of John Courtenay, Esq. from the books of this Society.

The names of those five gentlemen being expunged, agreeably to the resolutions of the Society,

Ordered, That the proceedings of the Society, on this day, be printed and published.

In name, and by order of the Society,

Signed, JOHN WHARTON, Chairman.

to attend to. He wished also the honourable gentleman would bring it forward on some distinct proposition stated to the House, that they might, early in the next Session of Parliament, take the whole question into consideration; in which case he should, perhaps, have reserved himself until the day appointed for the consideration of the subject; but as this was a general notice, without any specific proposition, he must say he felt no difficulty in asserting, in the most decisive terms, that he objected both to the time and the mode in which this business was brought forward. He felt this subject so deeply, that he must speak on it without any reserve. He would therefore confess, that, in one respect, he had changed his opinion upon this subject, and he was not afraid to own it. He retained his opinion of the propriety of a reform in Parliament, if it could be obtained without danger or mischief, by a general concurrence, pointing harmlessly at its object. But he confessed he was afraid, at this moment, that if agreed on by that House, the security of all the blessings we enjoyed would be shaken to the foundation. He confessed, he was not sanguine enough to hope that a reform at this time could safely be attempted. His object always had been, but now most particularly so, to give permanence to that which we actually enjoy, rather than remove any actually subsisting grievances.—He conceived that the beautiful system of our constitution, and the only security we had for the continuance of it, was in the House of Commons; but he was sorry to confess, that security was imperfect, while there were persons who thought that the people were not adequately represented in Parliament. It was essential to the happiness of the people, that they should be convinced that they, and the Members of that House, felt an identity of interest. That the nation at large, and the representatives of the people, held a conformity of sentiment: this was the essence of a proper representative assembly; under this legitimate authority, a people could be said to be really free; and this was a state in which the true spirit of proper democracy could be said to subsist. This was the only mode by which freedom and due order could be well united. If attempts were made to go beyond this, they ended in a wild state of nature that mocked the name of liberty, and by which the human character was degraded, instead of being free. He once

thought, and still thought, upon the point of the representation of the Commons, that if some mode could be adopted, by which the people could have any additional security for a continuance of the blessings which they now enjoy, it would be an improvement in the constitution of this country. That was the extent of his object ; farther he never wished to go ; and if this could be obtained without the risk of losing what we have, he should think it wise to make the experiment. When he said this, it was not because he believed there was any existing grievance in this country that was felt at this hour. On the contrary, he believed that at this moment we actually did enjoy as much happiness as we should, or that a rational man could ever hope for ; and if he said otherwise, he should be dealing unfairly with the House, with the Public, and with himself ; for these were his genuine feelings. He believed that we were in a state of prosperity and progressive improvement seldom equalled, never excelled, by any nation at any period in the history of this world.

He then came to the time and mode of bringing this subject forward. Upon these points, every rational man had two things to consider. These were, the probability of success, and the risk to be run by the attempt. Upon the latter consideration, he owned, his apprehensions were very great : he feared the corruptions that might follow the attempt ; and looking at it in both views, he saw nothing but discouragement. He saw no chance of succeeding in the attempt in the first place, but saw great danger of anarchy and confusion in the second. He saw no wisdom in attempting any thing, without an united and careful attention to the probable consequences, with fear and dread. It was true, he had made some attempts upon this subject himself, but at what time ? What were the circumstances in which he did so ? There was then a general apprehension, which now, thank God, was referred to rather as a matter of history than any thing else ; all fear of danger was entirely removed ; but there was then a general feeling, that we were upon the verge of a public national bankruptcy, and a strong sense was entertained of practical grievances :— this was at the conclusion of the American war ; succeeding a period, when the influence of the Crown was declared to have increased, to be increasing, and that it ought to be diminished.

Many thought, and he was of the number, that unless there was a better connection between the Parliament and the people, and an uniformity of sentiment between them, the safety of this country was endangered.

Many moderate men at that time admitted, there were abuses that ought to be corrected; but having weighed the whole state of the case, even as it stood then, they were of opinion, that although some evil was to be met with, yet, that on the whole the good preponderated, and therefore from a fear of possible consequences, they voted against his plan of reformation? If in such a time, under such circumstances, moderate men thought in this way, what would they think under the present circumstances? He put it not only to that House, but also to the country at large; and he would ask all moderate men in it, what were their feelings on this subject at this moment? He believed that he could anticipate the answer—"This is not a time to make hazardous experiments." Could we forget what lessons had been given to the world within a few years? Could we suppose that men felt the situation of this country, as now happily contrasted with others, to be in a deplorable condition? Could we expect that these moderate men would become converts to the new system attempted in another country? A system which all men would reject. He hoped that such doctrine would not find many proselytes among the moderate and the peaceable; if not, there could be no hope of success, and consequently, no wisdom in the attempt. But it seemed that there was a great number of persons in this country who wished for a reform in Parliament, and they were increasing daily. That their number was great, he was happy enough to doubt; what their interest or their vigour would be, if called upon to exert themselves, against the good sense and courage of the sober part of the community, did not occasion him much apprehension. He did not mean to allude to any particular Member of that House for the purpose of being severe—but when they came in the shape of advertisements in newspapers, inviting the Public as it were to repair to their standard and to join them; they should be reprobated, and the tendency of their meetings exposed to the people in their true

colours. He was willing, as long as he could, to give gentlemen the best construction that could be put upon their actions, and to give them credit for such sentiments; but the advertisements he alluded to in the public newspapers, were sanctioned with the very name of the honourable gentleman who had given this notice. He would say, that there should be a great deal of activity on the part of the friends of our constitution, who ought to take pains properly to address the public mind, and to keep it in that state which was necessary to preserve our present tranquillity. He had seen with concern, that those gentlemen of whom he spoke, who were Members of that House, were connected with others who professed not reform only, but direct hostility to the very form of our Government. This afforded suspicion that the motion for reform was nothing more than the preliminary to the overthrow of the whole system of our present Government. If they succeeded, they would overthrow what he thought the best constitution that was ever formed on the habitable globe. These considerations led him to wish the House to take great care that no encouragement should be given to any step that might sap the very foundation of our constitution. When he saw these opinions published, and knew them to be connected with opinions that were libels on the form of our Government; the hereditary succession to the Throne—the hereditary titles of our men of rank—the total destruction of all subordination in the State, he confessed he felt no inclination to promise his support to the proposed motion for a parliamentary reform. It was to follow a madness which had been called liberty in another country—a condition at war with true freedom and good order, a state to which despotism itself was preferable—a state in which liberty could not exist for a day; if it appeared in the morning, it must perish before sun-set. He begged leave to assure the House that he thought it his duty, to the last hour of his life, to oppose to the utmost of his power, attempts of this nature; so much did he disapprove of the present attempt, that if he was called to chuse either to hazard this, or for ever abandon all hopes or desire to have any reform at all, he would say he should have no reform whatever, and he believed that as a Member

of Parliament, an Englishman, or as an honest man, it was his duty to make that declaration at once. He wished the honourable gentleman to reflect on his character, the stake he had in the country, the hazard to which he might expose himself, and the great possessions he was heir to ; but above all, for the honour of his splendid and rising talents for eloquence, and the pursuits of virtue, all, all might be lost by an indiscreet attempt upon the subject ; he could not help lamenting that this notice had been given. He had then made a sort of compendium of all the objections, he said, he should submit to the House and the Public, if the motion should ever be made, and concluded with an encomium on the constitution of this country—a monument of human wisdom, which had been hitherto the exclusive blessing of the English nation.

Mr. FOX said, he understood that they were in some measure to consider themselves as debating some part of the subject in the present stage of it, and the question now was, “ Whether this subject should or should not be brought forward early in the next session of Parliament ? ” He felt additional difficulty from the speech he had just heard, and he was sorry to find it received so much of the approbation of the House. He knew that within the walls of that House, the words “ Parliamentary Reform ” were completely unpopular, the Public, he believed, regarded it in a very different view, and therefore he should state to the House what the feelings of his mind were upon the subject. First of all he begged it to be remembered, that he never professed to be as sanguine upon this subject as the right honourable gentleman who had just spoken ; but although less sanguine, he happened to be a little more consistent in this case, for he had early, in his public life, formed an opinion of the necessity of a parliamentary reform, he remained to this hour as fully convinced as ever of that necessity. The danger which then existed, still existed to the liberty of the people. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had, year after year, made speeches in favour of a Parliamentary Reform. He had followed it up to the year 1785, when at last all his ardour forsook him. The cause for this reform had, so far from diminishing, been pro-

gressively increasing, and more than ever in the last session of Parliament; he had given his reasons upon this subject before; he would not now say that there must be a parliamentary reform; he was almost forbidden to talk of it from the speech he had just heard; but unless something was done—he knew it was not agreeable to the House to hear it—but he would repeat, that unless something was done to quiet the minds of the people, there would be some difficulty in preserving the internal tranquillity of this kingdom for any great length of time. The misfortune was, that the proceedings of that House often were at variance with the opinion of the Public.

Of the truth of this, the armament against Russia was a striking instance. The declaration of the House was, that we should proceed to hostilities. The declaration of the people was, that we should not; and so strong was that declaration, that it silenced and overawed the Minister with his triumphant majority; he was obliged to relinquish his plan at a time when he had a confiding and implicit majority. What was the consequence?—That the people of England were at this moment paying the expence of an armament for which they never gave their consent, and as far as that goes, they pay their money for not being represented in Parliament; that their sentiments were not spoken in Parliament, and what was still worse, that when a complaint was made of the impropriety of this, those who called themselves the representatives of the people refused to inquire into the subject at all; they did not think it worth while to clear up to the people any part of the transaction, so as to shew them the folly of their opinion, and the wisdom of their representatives. These were the points that disgusted the Public with the proceedings of Parliament; the truth was, that the principle on which this, as well as other votes, had been given by that House, was wrong in itself; it was the confidence which had been so implicitly given to the Minister, and that too not merely to him from experience of his probity and talents, but

merely because he was Minister ; the doctrine was, that the agent of the executive power for the time being, be he who he may, is entitled to confidence ; and if he afterwards commits what the people call a blunder, no inquiry shall be had into his conduct. As to the other part of the Minister's speech, which related to the allies of his honourable friend (Mr. Grey), he thought he should give it a complete answer, by saying to the Minister, Pray, who will you have for your's ?—On our part there are infuriated republicans—on yours, there are the slaves of despotism ; both of them unfriendly, perhaps, to some part of the constitution of their country, but there was no comparison between them in point of real hostility to the spirit of freedom ; the one, by having too ardent a desire for liberty, lost sight of the true medium by which it was to be preserved ; the other detested the thing itself, and were pleased with nothing but tyranny and despotism. As to the books that had been lately published upon the principles of Government, and to which the Minister alluded, when he talked of dangerous doctrine against monarchy, he could only say, that he had not read many of them : there were two well-known pamphlets, written by a gentleman, who had distinguished himself as an author, during the American war, a native of that country, of the name of Paine. One of these two pamphlets he had read ; the other he had not seen ; and he must say, that whatever merit might be met with in that publication, he could not suppose we were so far reduced, as to be in any great danger from the abuse of a foreigner ; nor because, perhaps, (he did not remember seeing it, by the bye) that the word “ reform ” was to be seen in the “ Rights of Man,” that therefore all those who thought a reform necessary, agreed with the general tendency of that book ; the truth was, that the book, called “ Rights of Man,” was a performance totally different from all ideas of reform in our Government. It went to the length of changing the form of it. Why, then, should those who professed reverence for

the constitution of this country, be charged with having taken up the sentiments contained in a book that was a libel on it? As to the fear of innovation, he confessed there appeared to him to be very little in it; at least it could not be well urged by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because upon that point he must argue against himself; if innovation was wrong now, it must have been so always, when the Minister brought it forward. In short, the longer the reform had been delayed, the more urgent it became, and care should be taken that the disease should not be permitted to increase, until it required a desperate remedy.

In short, upon the word innovation, he must take the liberty of repeating what he uttered almost the first time he addressed that House; an observation which some thought quaintly expressed "That the greatest innovation that could be introduced in the constitution of England, was to come to a vote, that there should be no innovation in it." The greatest beauty of the constitution was, that in its very principle it admitted of perpetual improvement, which time and circumstances rendered necessary. It was a constitution, the chief excellence of which was, that of admitting a perpetual reform. He saw nothing in any human institution so very reverend as not to admit of being touched or looked at; in his opinion, the permanency of the constitution must depend upon what the people thought of it, and before they could have any great reverence for it, it was necessary they should be convinced that the voice of their representatives was in unison with their own; he did not chuse to make any invidious reference to past circumstances; if it was to be understood that the House of Commons should be the organ of the public voice, he must say that he could not help wishing that no Minister might again advise the Sovereign to disregard the address of the House of Commons, because it did not speak the voice of the people. [Alluding to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's conduct in the year 1784, when the House of Commons addressed the King not to dissolve the Parliament at that alarming crisis.] He could not conceive any thing more dangerous than such a practice. Here he took a view of the present administration, and the history of

it, as applicable to the present subject, and confessed that there was a great deal of the Minister's speech that he did not understand when compared with some of his former declarations.—Much had been insisted upon, although obliquely, upon the supposed terrific situation of France, upon which he should observe, that the old government was so detestable, that the most moderate man he ever heard in his life, agreed, that if it could be proved that there could not be great improvements introduced into it, the whole of it should be overthrown at once; the revolution therefore was justified, and therefore there did not appear to him so much danger from the supposed contagion of their example; to dread similar danger we should be in similar circumstances, which was nothing like the case. Why then should we shut the door against reform? Whenever he heard speeches on the dreadful situation of the French, (tolerably well exaggerated by the way, in the accounts we received of their calamities, and of the defectiveness of the present form of their Government); he always thought they preceded expressions of disapprobation of all reformation in this country. If it be true that the people of this country feel grievances, and really wish for a parliamentary reform, they have a right to have it; if, on the contrary, there are no such grievances, nor any such wishes, his honourable friend was in the right to give this notice; it afforded time to inquire into the facts, and called on the Public for attention to the object. At all events it was proper that attention should be called to these things, and, he believed, it would turn out to be the general opinion that a reformation was wanting, for he believed it to be a principle which attended all human institutions, that unless they were amended, they would naturally become worse, that whatever was not improved must naturally degenerate.

He might be asked, Mr. Fox said, why was not his name in the list of the society for the reform? His reason was, that though he saw great and enormous grievances, he did not see the remedy. Had his honourable friend consulted him, he should have hesitated upon recommending him to take the part he had taken; having, however, taken it, he could not see why the present period was improper for the discussion. The right honourable gentleman, he thought had in his warmth out-run himself, when he held forth Great Britain as the only

power exempted from despotism and anarchy, and in possession of undisturbed liberty: France, Mr. Fox said, had entirely changed a detestable Government. Poland, he hoped the right honourable gentleman would not maintain, was under despotism; and he would make a false statement if he stated otherwise than that America was in the full enjoyment of liberty, a liberty which had produced justice, commerce, wealth, and prosperity. The world he believed to be rapidly improving in science, in knowledge, and in virtue; and as philosophy was spreading her light round every part of the world, England alone, he hoped, would not remain without improvement, and enveloped in the darkness of bigotry. Our constitution he admired, and particularly that principle of it which admitted of every improvement being grafted upon it safely. The Crown had been curtailed of its prerogative, the Lords had had their privileges abridged, and the Commons, within his memory, had also had their privileges abridged; he saw no danger therefore in continued reform, and had no difficulty in declaring himself a friend to improvement of every kind. He concluded with observing, that he wished the Public to know the real object of this notice. To call the public attention to the subject of a reform in the representation of the people in Parliament.

The SPEAKER reminded the House, that they had no motion before them; but said, if it was their pleasure to proceed, he should submit entirely to their judgement.

Mr. BURKE began by saying that there were few subjects, indeed, which would have induced him to come down, and deliver his opinions in that House, but this was certainly one which he thought he was in duty bound not to pass over in silence. He was now an old man, and there was still a stronger reason for his not engaging in the discussion of public questions, that he had received from his best friends the best advice that they could have given to him, it was, to retire. His friends judged right, and he certainly thought himself unfit for business, when he recollected that he had lost such friends, as any man must have been proud to associate with, and with whom he had so long acted with the most fervent and mutual sincerity; that being the case, the advice and the conduct of his friends, as well as twenty-seven years experience in Parliament,

was a warning for him how to guide his future proceedings in that House, or in other words, a warning to retire, considering himself at the same time as one who had done his duty, and had become old and infirm in the service of his country; yet while he left more active concerns of life to the conduct of more vigorous men in years and understanding, he still would put in his claim as a friend to the country, to use his utmost exertions in its service, whenever an attack was made upon the constitution, and to defend its real interests against every attempt to overturn it. As invalids therefore are always put upon garrison duty, and though not the first for foreign service, are those who ought first to move when the garrison is attacked, it became his duty now to come forward; they ought especially to be foremost in the defence; because if they were worsted, they left behind them those who were possessed of more strength and greater power to defend it effectually. In this view, he looked upon the present notice, which, taking it merely as a notice, he considered to be fraught with mischievous consequences; not that he meant to ascribe any wrong motives, or intentions, to those who brought it forward, because he knew well that there were amongst them many for whom he had the highest respect, and most sincere friendship; but, he must contend, that though their motives might be as pure and patriotic as could be, still, by acting upon an erroneous system, the consequences might be dangerous. He was happy to see, and to congratulate the House and the country upon one thing, and it was that two very great, and deservedly very great men, in that House, and in the opinion of the country, gave similar opinions, and entertained similar sentiments upon this subject, with this only difference, that the right honourable gentleman opposite to him had stated his belief that no such grievances existed as ought to induce the House to agree to this idea of reform, and the other right honourable gentleman thought that if those grievances did exist, the friends to a reform had not proposed or held forth any thing like a remedy for them, because he was convinced that a parliamentary reform would not be an effectual remedy, if such grievances existed. He did not think that that word reform ought to carry that weight with it which some gentlemen seemed to allow. If a reform was necessary, the way to prove that it ought to be agreed to was

first by stating the grievance, and then pointing out the specific remedy. This, however, was not done in the present case. The friends to this plan of reformation seemed to address the people in the same manner, as if a physician was to say to a patient, " You labour under a terrible disease; and " must take any and every remedy we prescribe for you, whether it is opium, an emetic, a blistering plaster, or all together ; you must take them, however discordant in effects, " because, depend upon it, you are in such a desperate situation that you must do it." Similar was the present mode of telling the people you are unhappy, ought to be discontented, and call for a reform, though we do not even pretend to specify or shew what reform is proper, or such as might be of any service to you. He considered giving a vote in that House upon any subject as very different to joining an association for making converts to a cause by holding out to the people the necessity of complaining, when they themselves felt no cause for complaint. The present reformers appeared in the light of quacks, rather than regular physicians, for they held out preventives, when no disease was dreaded, which they wished to cram down the throats of the people, and make them complain, when they were not sensible of grievances, and when the public voice was completely different to what those friends to reformation stated it to be. He would ask if the sense of the people had been consulted, whether this association would have been formed? Were there any petitions from the people stating their grievances? If this was not the case, was it good and constitutional doctrine to hold out to them, that the House of Commons was in itself a grievance, that there was in its formation something intrinsically corrupt? Let democracy get to its greatest extent in this country, or in that House, still it would be found that there were, and would continue to be, great men in that House upon different sides of any question, that must and ought to have influence. He regretted being obliged to notice what a right honourable friend of his had said, relative to the proceeding in the year 1784, their mischievous tendency he allowed as well as the right honourable gentleman, but what did arise from the conduct of the different societies and clubs that associated in 1780, in many parts of the kingdom? These societies, in associating,

were obliged to admit amongst their numbers men of very different principles, and reformers of various denominations, the consequence was, that no system could be thought of that suited the views of all, of course many were dissatisfied, and in the end they dropt every idea of their own reform; this failure, however, he could not ascribe to the right honourable gentleman opposite, who did every thing he could to bring about a reform, and seemed as eager and zealous to effect it, as he enforced it with all the natural eloquence and energy that he possessed.

At this period, the acquiescence of the people was reckoned necessary, as he trusted it ever would, and it was found then, and he believed it would be found now, that the people had no such idea in their heads; they did not then, nor would they now, call for a parliamentary reform. What next did the honourable gentleman say?—Why, that they must make the people feel the grievances they laboured under, if they could not discover them themselves, and excite them to complaints which they knew no cause for; and all this they would do from the following argument: that they know some reform is necessary, and that by putting it into the hands of such men as are, from their rank, fortunes, character, and respectability in the country, the most likely to propose a temperate and adequate reform, having much at stake themselves, they will study the more the interests of the people. As to the characters of the men, he would not hesitate a moment to pronounce them entitled to every encomium that could be bestowed on them, but would they pledge their characters and their consequence in this country, that if they once raise a strong spirit of reformation and innovation amongst the people, they will undertake, or have the power, to guide their opinions, and prevent excesses, when the ideas of the people not improbably may carry them to an ungovernable length, upon a subject which they understand but little of. If the honourable gentlemen who proposed this could guide and regulate the public opinion as they could their own, the case would be different; but that was not possible, and therefore he thought there could be no such thing as a temperate reform. Let them recollect, that in the days of Hampden, Hyde, and other reformers of those days, and in different periods of the English history, it was found almost in-

variably that the beginners of any reformation never saw it ended. This was one strong reason why they should not countenance any indefinite reform; for in fact they never could know its extent and its consequences. He agreed perfectly with his right honourable friend, that this country had been for a very long time in a perpetual state of innovation, and progressive reform, and though Kings had reigned who rather checked than encouraged improvements of the constitution, yet it was found that improvements had, from time to time, taken place, and they were uniformly found to be rather in defence of the real constitution than innovations. It was likewise true, that we had at different times cut off certain branches of the prerogative, when those branches were found to be inimical to the welfare of the people, but we had always kept the lamp of the constitution burning, and supplied it occasionally with necessary assistance, without ever attempting to alter its former nature; we had seen a reformation, a revolution, and, on an abdication of the crown, we had seen a new family seated upon the throne; but we had never, at any one period, touched upon an alteration in the representation of the people till very lately. If we are in slavery, if in anarchy and confusion, if, in short, we labour under any grievance whatever, let us look if it proceeds from the representation of the people in Parliament. Is the landed or commercial interest affected; or does any one interest overpower or act against another in this country? or can it be proved that such are the effects of the present representation of the people? He really believed not. The Russian armament had been mentioned, and certainly that was a subject upon which the opinion of the people was very decided, though that opinion differed widely from the opinion of that House. The people were decidedly against the measure, but yet they did not go so far as to say that the measure ought to destroy the Minister; and this, he contended, was generally the case with the people of England, whoever was Minister at the time. It had been so with Sir Robert Walpole, and would be so with every future Minister. He came next to what had been said on Paine's book, which he thought had been very properly termed by the right honourable gentleman a libel of the most infamous kind against the constitution of this country. He would ask those who supported

those visionary schemes of reform, what it was they had to dread? Could they point out any person in that House who was the avowed friend to despotism, or could they suggest any thing like a conspiracy against the privileges of the people?—He believed it was impossible; but he thought there was no difficulty in saying there were those in the country who were avowed enemies to the constitution. [A cry of, Name him! Name him!] He begged gentlemen not to distress themselves by the repetition of calls, with which he could not comply; he would ask, whether he had called upon them in a similar way, when they made allusions much stronger than he had done; however, he would satisfy their curiosity on this point, by stating what the declared opinions of that night warranted him to do, which was, that Paine's pamphlet was an infamous libel upon the constitution, and therefore that those clubs and societies who recommended that book to be read by the people, were the avowed enemies of the constitution, by prescribing to the people, what was admitted by the first men in that House, a libel on the constitution, tending, by its contents, to subvert and overturn it. Mr. Paine had been called a stranger, a foreigner, not an Englishman, a Frenchman, nor American. In short, he seemed to be a man who knew just enough of all countries to confuse and distract all, without being of the least use to any. There were in this country men who scrupled not to enter into an alliance with a set in France of the worst traitors and regicides that had ever been heard of, the Club of the Jacobins. Agents had been sent from this country, to enter into a foederation with that iniquitous club, and those were men of some consideration in this country; the names he alluded to were Thomas Cooper and James Watt. [Here Mr. Burke read the address presented to the Club of the Jacobins by those gentlemen on the 16th of April.] He said, this was nothing of fancy or invention, but an avowal that there were clubs in this country, who bound themselves, by a foederation with those regicides, to approve their conduct, and act in concert with them. He likewise could name others who avowed similar principles; for instance, Mr. Walker of Manchester; and what did those people do? did they only give their own sentiments? No. By the answer of the Jacobin club, it appeared that those worthies of Manchester undertook, from

what authority he knew not, to represent all England. This led him to state, that, however upright the motives of the honourable gentlemen near him might be, they must necessarily, in order to succeed in their object, unite themselves with some of the worst men in the kingdom.

He ridiculed the idea of a moderate or temperate reform as impossible, nor could he look upon the present schemes as if there were two parties, one for a temperate reform, and the other for a subversion of the constitution. And he would ask those honourable gentlemen if they could answer for all who might join them on this occasion, and were sure that they would be satisfied with moderate measures? He then observed that France was not in a situation for reform, but was distracted by a violent party. He described the National Assembly as consisting of 700 Members, 400 of whom were lawyers, 300 of no description that he could name; and out of the whole he believed there were not six of them that possessed in any one way 100*l.* per ann. Having treated the National Assembly and their conduct with great contempt, he asked if this was a time for encouraging visionary reforms in this country? He said, though he had generally disagreed to the reforms formerly proposed, it was because the mode did not meet his approbation; and he never had resisted reform when he thought it likely to be useful; for instance, the reform moved by the right honourable gentleman seemed to him, if it had been agreed to, productive of good effects, without risk of any harm; but in the year 1780 the associates in different parts of the country would have defeated any temperate reform. The noble Duke who was then a reformer had proposed one mode, and the right honourable gentleman another, and he stated what the difference between them was. He adverted to the country meetings, which he thought not the most probable or quiet way of obtaining the sense of the people, or even knowing the true sense of these meetings. He made some remarks on confidence in Ministers, which had been too much enlarged both in 1784 and 1792, towards the right honourable gentleman, as had been stated by his honourable friend. He then declared his fixed admiration of that constitution, which gave us freedom without losing order; and which, by increasing its order, increased its liberty; and which, he hoped, and trusted, he ever

would see a continuance of, unmolested and secure against every attack. Theories ought to be formed in experience, and instead of adapting the constitution to a theory, the theories he wished to see grow out of the constitution. He concluded, by putting it to the House to say, whether they knew of any existing grievance that warranted the risk, that must inevitably attend the proposed motion for a parliamentary reform.

Mr. FOX said, that he must explain, in a few words, three points on which the right honourable gentleman had misunderstood him; the first was not very material: it was, that though he mentioned Paine's book as a libel on the constitution, he had not used the terms infamous and seditious, &c.—which the right honourable gentleman applied to it. The next was that when he had mentioned confidence, it was without any personal allusion to the right honourable gentleman opposite, but to the King's Ministers for the time, conceiving the confidence of late so much required by the executive power as very unconstitutional and destructive. The third was, that he had not said that a parliamentary reform could be no remedy to existing grievances, but that he had heard of no specific mode of reform that he was convinced would be a proper remedy.

Mr. BURKE shortly explained, and in the course of what he said, declared that with regard to confidence, he had no connection either with Ministers or those out of office, but he well remembered, the first great question about confidence was used by the right honourable gentleman in 1774, and he thought it a very strong point at the time.

Mr. WINDHAM said, he acknowledged that he saw more than an ordinary difficulty to speak on this subject, and he felt considerable pain also from being obliged to oppose any thing brought forward and supported by his honourable friends near him, with whom he always thought it an honour to agree.—But upon the present occasion, his duty and conviction led him, even upon the notice given, to offer his most solemn declaration, that whenever and in whatever shape the motion for a parliamentary reform was brought forward he must oppose it. Without going into particulars, he would confine himself to the mode of bringing it on, and the remedy to be applied to

them ; and he opposed it particularly on this ground, that it tended to raise and excite amongst the people an universal discontent, where none existed previously. It was easy to raise a storm, but it was not in their power to know when it might abate, or what effects it might produce. He did not mean to make any improper allusion to the motives of his honourable friends, but as to their allies in this business, he must say that there might be a great difference between their motives and their purposes, and for different purposes from the same motive, but the question seemed to be thus put by some people ; either that the public mind is already excited to complain by existing grievances, or it is not ; if it is, the proposed scheme must be useful and innocent, if not, it is right to put it in the power of the people to consider of their real situation, and determine accordingly. This dilemma, which the printed paper seemed to put the people in, he disapproved of, because there was nothing definite or conclusive in the proposition. It supposes the country to be dead to a sense of its grievances, which is bad, because it wishes to rouse the people from quietness to ferments and confusion. The grievances, if any, ought first to be pointed out, and fully considered, and then the remedy that was to be applied, so that by comparison, the system might be either approved or rejected. He had opposed the plan for reform brought forward by the right honourable gentleman formerly, but certainly when times were considered, he had far greater reason to oppose that now brought forward by his right honourable friends, when the public mind both here and in other countries was in such a state, that even the slightest scratch might produce a mortal wound. He stated the dangerous alliances which such associations must enter into ; whatever their ostensible or real motives might be, he agreed with the last Speaker, that the beginners of reforms could not always end them, and that a temperate parliamentary reform was impracticable. He alluded to the doctrines of some of the clubs that had been mentioned, which tended to nothing short of a total subversion of the constitution. He recurred to the opinions of our ancestors, and the veneration in which they held the constitution, when the admiration of it was such that any person who had uttered a word of discontent would either be reckoned mad, or disaffected. He hoped, and wished from his heart,

that every stage of this reformation might be resisted, and he trusted successfully ; and was much afraid that his honourable friends were not aware that, by the alliances they formed, they were far from being certain that they were not fostering a young lion, who in the first moment of his power, might employ his strength against themselves ; upon all which grounds, he gave his avowed resolution to oppose the motion whenever it appeared.

The honourable T. ERSKINE said, he did not rise to answer any thing that had been said that night, but account why his name appeared in the paper so frequently alluded to. He would not only do this, but pledge himself to fulfil the promise annexed to his name. And if it should afterwards happen that he was mistaken in the result, he would not be ashamed to own it, because he had the consolation to think that he was not the first that begun this system. The right honourable gentleman opposite, who began his political career with more than extraordinary parliamentary reform, which, though unsuccessful, did him the highest honour, and corresponded exactly with the professed sentiments of his father, whose wisdom, ability, and great political character, was as justly admired as it was dear to the country. In this case it became him to state to the House what he had done, why he did it, and to reply to what had been said as to the time and mode of doing it ; and he felt extremely happy, when he thought that so early an opportunity had occurred to explain his conduct, because he declared that if he was convinced at any future period, that he had acted wrong, however conscious he now was as to the rectitude of his motives, he would at once retract all he had done, and confess his error. His mode of life, and that business which trusted him with the management of other people's affairs, made it necessary to think of consequences, and act accordingly. It could not therefore be thought, that if the purposes of the association which he had joined, were to scatter doubts amongst the people, to say they were a ruined nation, and, as it were, to sound the trumpet of alarm [a cry of hear ! hear ! vociferated from all parts of the House], Mr. Erskine asked, was this the purity or the propriety of the House ? if they meant to hear, why make such a noise to render it impossible, by drowning a voice already exhausted by the fatigue he had undergone in another

place, and if any thing he said merited such applause, he trusted the House would permit him to finish his sentence. If it was their purpose to sound the trumpet of alarm, and combine for the subversion of the constitution, was it possible that he who was a lawyer, and knew the blessing of the constitution which he enjoyed much advantage from, could have lent his name to any such scheme? He stated his ideas of the constitution in the three distinct branches of King, Lords, and Commons, and declared his attachment to the real constitutional principles.— He then came to the mode of election, which in its best state we owed entirely to accident; it could have been formed in no other way; and he wished to know if the right honourable gentleman opposite would assert, or even allow that there was at this moment an adequate representation of the people in Parliament; he did not believe that he would; and he begged to know in what respect those grievances, which induced the right honourable gentleman to move for a parliamentary reform in 1784, were altered at present, what had happened since, or was the right honourable gentleman assured that the Parliament, from the effects of the American war, would not relapse into that state of corruption, which he then thought they were in, and would acknowledge this as the object of his motion, and of his father's opinions also—was the voice of the people sufficiently felt now? What security have we in his admiration that the same calamities may not happen, and the same corruption, as happened then; and if any danger attached to reform, certainly the right honourable gentleman must incur a greater censure than those with whom he acted, by having first proposed to reform that constitution which was so often said had been from age to age the admiration of the world. It was impossible that the opinions of a set of young men, as they were called, written on a square bit of paper, and printed in the daily newspapers, could have greater danger in it, than the opinion of Lord Chatham. There was nothing, he contended, in the declaration that entrenched on the prerogative of the King or the privileges of the Lords or Commons. So much was he a friend to the constitution, that if he thought it attacked in any way, he would readily return to the profession he had left, and fight for it while he had breath. He stated what a melancholy day's work he had had in the Court

of King's Bench, adverting to the case of John Horne Tooke, who had written and uttered such libellous matter against that House and the constitution, and who, in his defence, had referred to their journals to prove that boroughs were bought and sold like cattle at a fair; and he ventured to say, that had there been no truth in what he advanced, he would not have been allowed to go out of the Court in the way he did, nor could any jury have hesitated a moment to give a verdict for his right honourable friend, as they had, at last, very properly done that day. He stated, that on the Russian war, the opinion of the House was diametrically opposite to that of the people, and yet the people obliged the Minister to forego his plan, though not by their representatives in Parliament. If the hundred gentlemen now associated, acted upon wild or visionary ideas the country would soon find them out, and decry them; but if otherwise, what danger could attend any thing they have done? If the facts on which the association had been founded, were either false or exaggerated, then their efforts would be still-born and abortive. But if, on the contrary, their union was formed on a right principle, and if it should also appear that there were persons in the country who were determined to achieve every possible mischief to the constitution, then the association might take their motto from Mr. Burke, who had said, in one of his works, that "when bad men conspired, it became necessary for good men to associate!" In this view of the question, he might add from the same authority, "That temperate reforms were wise in proportion as they were moderate, and that great reforms were bad as they are desperate." The latter ever resembled the conduct of a mob before a brothel, who "abate the nuisance by pulling down the House!" He proceeded to defend the mode in which this business had been brought forward. There was in fact no mode left, he said, but that of an appeal to the understandings of the people. To speak in that House of a parliamentary reform, was literally addressing argument to the "deaf adder." The application must fall from the interest which individuals had in the subject. It was as if he had to make a professional address to a jury on an ejectment, and were told on his rising, that each of the individuals who composed the jury, were tenants in common on the estate in question. In such a case he

should certainly put an immediate end to his address. He alluded to Mr. Pitt's having created so many Peers, both in England and Ireland, not on account of their services in the field or cabinet, but merely for borough interest, and he contended every Minister must do the same, while the present system existed. With regard to Messrs. Cooper and Watt, when first mentioned, he was sorry to hear of it, because he and the other gentlemen wished to be as cautious as possible about admission of improper persons, but his mind was at ease when he now could say that they had nothing at all to do with the association.

Lord CARHAMPTON rose to complain of having been unnecessarily alluded to by a right honourable gentleman. He really did not wish to create an unpleasant or irksome feeling in the right honourable gentleman's mind. Some gentlemen had thought those who were for a reform were sincere. Would the right honourable gentleman give him leave to doubt? because he believed the right honourable gentleman to be a good friend to the constitution, he could not believe him to be sincere, and was glad to see he had not signed his name among a society of, what should he call them, of Knights of the Square Piece of Paper.

Lord NORTH said, he would but for a short time intrude on the patience of the House, not meaning to enter into any argument upon the subject of the notice given by his honourable friend, as that discussion would be more proper when the regular moment for discussion came; he rose merely to express his disapprobation of the proposition. His Lordship expressed his satisfaction at the language held by Mr. Pitt, and assured him that he would co-operate with him in resisting the motion whenever it should be made. That association might be useful and in some cases necessary, he was not prepared to deny, but that must be in cases of such extreme exigency that the remedy could be little short of a revolution. He declared, he gave his honourable friends full credit for their sincerity and for the purity of their intentions; but those who, like him, preferred real and practical happiness, must stop at the onset, or they might wait till resistance would be too late, and the ability of his honourable friend and the abilities of those who might join with him in forming an opposition to stop the torrents of po-

litical fury, when once it was roused, might be overborne by the arts, ingenuity and popular doctrines of Mr. Paine and his associates. His Lordship said he could not better illustrate the manner in which resorting to such a mode of quieting the discontents of the people and preserving the constitution struck him, than by quoting a saying, which an honourable friend of his, and who was certainly not the least distinguished by abilities as a member of the Association, had put into the mouth of Mr. Acres. "I fight in order to prevent any misunderstanding." He hoped his differing in this particular instance from the opinion of his honourable friend who had given the notice, would make no alteration whatever in that friendship which had hitherto subsisted between them, and which he looked to as one of the comforts of the remainder of this life.

Mr. POWYS said, he had read the Association advertisement, and heard the notice given by his honourable friend, with a great degree of pain, but he considered it as no small alleviation of that pain, that the House were permitted the debate, since it was not only an acknowledgement of the importance of the subject, but a recognition, that it was paramount to all the forms of the House. Mr. Powys entered his protest against the proposed motion, and said, he thought it became every man to step forward and express his disapprobation of it. He declared he was one of those, who at all times and under all circumstances, have opposed the idea of reform. His visual organs were, he said, so bad, that even with all the aid of the telescopes, or glasses, of modern reformers, he could not see the defects and blemishes in the constitution that those oculists would fain point out. It might be thought that he had eyes that could not see, or an heart that would not acknowledge what he saw. It had been well said, by an honourable and learned gentleman quoting the language of a right honourable friend of his, "when bad men conspired, good men must associate." Against whom were they to unite? He looked only to the genial heat that animated and invigorated the constitution, and not to little minute spots and blemishes, that might possibly be discovered in some parts of it. Let gentlemen before they give any vote, compare the actual blessings they now enjoyed, with the theoretical perfection, which the honourable gentleman

would have them possess. What would the honourable gentleman below him say would be gained by adopting their propositions? Were they to be tried by the merits of the question itself, or by some adventitious circumstance? We were not at present unquiet, but we were first to reduce the subjects of the country to a state of unquietness, and then carry the plan into execution. Were the gentlemen sure, that when discontents were once fomented, it was in their power to allay them? The honourable gentleman called himself a physician; had he felt his patient's pulse, and was he convinced his medicines might not operate to the destruction of the patient? Thus much he could not help saying, and he called upon gentlemen not to argue the question, but to enter their direct protest against it.

Mr. LAMBTON said, that if the declaration of the Society were pregnant with such mischiefs as had been imputed to it, he should think himself insane when he signed his name to it. But he saw none of the mischiefs, and many of the benefits. It was a fact too palpable to be denied, that abuses did exist in the representation of the people. The nation was tranquil, prosperous, and wealthy; the Monarch on the throne beloved by his subjects; this was, therefore, the most proper time to consider temperately of these abuses, and apply the proper remedy. By what means had the public opinion on the slave trade been communicated to the House, but by associations of men comparing and speaking their sentiments upon it? So it would be in all cases founded on reason and justice. Whatever difficulties they might meet with at first, the House would at length be induced to hear and grant the remedy. He was sorry to hear reforms treated as visionary, and abuses glossed over by gaudy and sounding epithets. These might disguise, but could not conceal them. He was not a republican, a name attempted to be fixed on all who talked of reform. He was for the preservation of the three branches of our Government, the union and co-operation of all, and an enemy only to that which rendered them odious and deformed. Their defects were what induced persons to write against the constitution itself, and others to read their obnoxious doctrines. To remove these defects, was to perform the best service to the constitution, and disarm its enemies of this only plausible argument.

Mr. T. GRENVILLE said, it was not for the purpose of arguing the subject that he rose, but it was to discharge his duty in endeavouring to avert the danger that he feared, from the subject being in agitation, because the proposition that was brought forward tended to excite a spirit of complaint in the people. He was ready to coalesce with any man, to enable him to resist effectually the measure proposed, and therefore he would be happy to unite with the right honourable gentleman in opposing the motion, because he thought it was fraught with the utmost danger to the constitution.

Mr. SHERIDAN began with remarking, that a noble friend of his had stated, from a very poor authority, a circumstance of two persons agreeing to fight, to prevent a misunderstanding. He should have imagined the noble Lord would rather have considered that as a sort of Irish excuse for a duel, than as any serious matter of argument. When the motion should come forward, he trusted it would be met by argument and reason, rather than by declamation and clamour, for that had been a day of clamour, rather than a day of debate. He hoped there would be no radical dispute among those with whom he had the honour to act in general, or at least that their difference on a particular point would not be increased by the applause of the other side of the House. They who thought as he did, and had signed the paper in question, felt great anxiety in differing from their friends. They had not clamour to support them, and could find consolation only in the goodness of their cause. A noble Lord, in terms neither very civil nor parliamentary, had doubted the sincerity of his right honourable friend, (Mr. Fox) in what he had said in their favour. They wanted not the signature of his right honourable friend to assure them of his concurrence. They had his bond in the steadiness of his political principle, and the integrity of his heart. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Powys) had called on all who thought as he did, to protest against their object. It was wisely done; for to protest was much easier than to argue. When the day of discussion came, however, he hoped those who thought with the honourable gentleman would have more respect, if not for the Society, for the country at large, than to think that protests without argument would be sufficient. No question, he knew, could be more unpopular in the House; he had not so bad a

taste as to wish to speak upon it on that account ; but he should think it base and contemptible to shrink from his opinion, because an unmeaning clamour, was excited against it. There was, indeed, one description of people who would be still more clamorous against the Members, and the object of the Association—all those who wished the destruction of the constitution, under the pretext of reform ; and yet these were the men whom they were told they must act with. Far from it ; the true allies of such men were those who opposed a necessary and a temperate reform, who, on whatever sophistical arguments, abandoned their former principles in support of it. Was it a light argument mentioned by the learned gentleman, who supported the necessity of reform with so much ability, that sixty or seventy Peers had been created, or promoted, by the present Minister for public services, for no distinguished abilities, but merely for their interest in returning Members of the House of Commons ? Here Peerages had been bartered for election interest ; in a neighbouring kingdom they had been all but proved to have been put up to auction for money. An honourable county Member had gone so far as to charge the Minister with making men Peers not fit to be his groom, and yet he was loud in the clamour against reform. The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) formerly so zealous in the cause of reform, failing in his proposition for adding one hundred Members to the House of Commons, had added almost an equal number to the House of Peers ; in his public letter to the reverend Mr. Wyvill, he professed himself a friend, both as a man and a Minister, to parliamentary reform, and pledged himself to pursue it till accomplished. What had since happened to change his opinion ? He had been eight years a Minister, and found he could do without it. They who thought reform at all times improper, were consistent ; but let them be careful of what alliance they formed against it. Let them be particularly on their guard against the right honourable gentleman, who, while they leagued to oppose reform, for ever was watching only an opportunity convenient for himself ; the constitution had no enemy so dangerous as hypocrisy ; those who clung to it with all its defects ; no man so much to dread as he who kept his principles in reserve, to be acted upon as he saw expedient for his own ambition or popularity, who one day lead

on the powers of prerogative, and another, the wildest advocates of democracy. Mr. Sheridan declared he wished the question to be considered as no party question, not a miserable scramble for places and power, but to be taken upon its own merits, as an important constitutional question. With respect to the unreasonableness of the time for bringing forward such a motion, he wished to know whether it was considered so on account of the prosperous and tranquil state of the country, or on account of the increasing discontents of the people. Let it be branded with both; the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) he supposed, wrote his pacifying pamphlet to quiet those discontents. One of the chief reasons that induced him to sign his name to the paper, was the seeing Mr. Walker's name to the Manchester resolutions. Mr. Walker, he said, was a very respectable character, a man of sense, character, and opulence. Mr. T. Cooper, also, he had the pleasure to know. He took notice of a right honourable gentleman's declaration, that he had been twenty-seven years in Parliament, and during the whole of that period, excepting only about two years, had complained every year, that they were violating some principles of the constitution, or infringing some privileges of the House; and then he supposed the right honourable gentleman said to the Buckinghamshire freeholders, "Oh, there was nothing in that, it was only our party way of talking; all the reform we want, is only to get into the places of the other gentlemen, and then things will go on well." With regard to what the right honourable gentleman had said, of the correspondence between Mr. Cooper, and the clubs at Paris, if he were furnished with the right honourable gentleman's speech, during the American war, in answer to some charges of having corresponded with the Americans, he dared say, he should have a very good excuse to set up. Just as it answered the purpose for argument the people were lowered or exalted; one gentleman had talked of their nourishing a young Lion, and another of a storm. Those metaphors might be applied either way. If they were at sea in a ship, and were to see a storm rising, it would be more natural for a good seaman to say of the vessel, "there is a storm coming, let's examine the tackle, and see that her bottom is sound," than to say, "the ship is going on in her regular course; let her proceed, with-

"out any fears for her safety." Another gentleman had talked of the Citadel. He would ask, was the Citadel attacked? If it was threatened was it not proper that they should repair to the ramparts and mount guard? With respect to the Russian war, the House, unfortunately for the honourable gentleman's argument, did nothing against the measure; but the people without doors disliked the war, and that compelled the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer to abandon his purpose.

Major HOBART said, as the honourable gentleman had thought proper to allude particularly to the Irish Government, he begged leave to trouble the House with a few words on the subject. Peerages never were sold, he said, as had been clearly proved. With regard to the volunteer associations, many gentlemen of great respectability had entered into them, and when Ireland had gained her independence, she felt her consequence and her prosperity. But when a reform of Parliament was in agitation, the volunteers were embodied in the capital to intimidate the House of Commons, upon which all the respectable men left their corps and retired, and Parliament was dissolved, and reform was heard of no more. He said, with regard to the subject of that day's notice, it was a little extraordinary, that the honourable gentleman should call upon those who objected to any motion to argue against it, before any specific motion had been stated, or he believed even considered by the honourable gentlemen themselves.

Mr. SHERIDAN in explanation said, Mr. Gratton had publicly asserted in the House of Commons in Dublin, that Peerages were sold, and no satisfactory contradiction had been made.

Mr. BURKE rose to explain; he said, he had been called on by a strong voice, to explain a correspondence he had held during the American war. It was true, he said, he had held a correspondence with Dr. Franklin, for the release of General Burgoyne, who was a worthy man and a brave and gallant officer, and appeared to be deserted by the Government at home, and oppressed by the Congress. That correspondence he had still among his papers, and he did not think it a disgrace to him; he declared himself ready to put it into the hands of an honourable gentleman near him, (Col. Tarleton) equally a

friend to the honourable gentleman and himself. He concluded with declaring, that the proposed reform would be equally fatal to the aristocracy of the country, and the House of Commons.

Mr. ROLLE declared he had ever opposed propositions of reform, and he was determined to continue so to do; it was, he said, a clear proof that his constituents approved of his conduct, since they had four several times returned him their representative. He assured Mr. Sheridan that no sneer of his, should prevent his doing his duty.

Sir JAMES ERSKINE ST. CLAIR declared himself adverse to the motion of which they had received notice that day. He would maintain, and should find no difficulty to support the proposition, that the present representation in Parliament was full, adequate, and competent to all the purposes of a House of Commons. He mentioned his having been informed of a lady in the north at the beginning of this century, who having been told that her husband and family had suffered the sentence of the law, said "so much the better, this will make them "the more odious." He gave his learned relation and his friends full credit for the goodness of their motives, but when he considered the extreme to which their natural warmth would lead them, he was greatly alarmed indeed!

Major MAITLAND, rose, because he thought it his duty, in a few words to explain the reason, that induced him to sign his name to the paper, and he declared from every thing he had heard, he was the more confirmed in his conviction of the propriety of his conduct in signing his name. The Major said, the danger if they shrunk from it would be greater, and that it ought to be looked full in the face. He mentioned the ill success of Mr. Sheridan's motion, relative to the reform of the Scotch burghs, as a reason for not coming forward in the first instance with a specific motion.

Mr. GREY said, he would not add much to the length of the debate; he had never felt more anxiety and irritation of mind than he had felt the whole of that day, and he rose then under the impression, for anxious and uneasy he must have been to find those whose good opinion was dear to him, deprecate with so much warmth and such strong expressions of apprehension and alarm, the notice which he had given. When he

gave it, he had no expectation or idea of the debate being prolonged to that late hour of the night, and exhausted as he was, he did assure the House he would not detain them long. He hoped it would not be thought that his motives were other than proper.

With respect to the preservation of the public tranquillity, he had as great a stake in the general quiet as any man in the kingdom; he could have no intention, therefore, to do any thing that should lead to anarchy, or create confusion. Two objections had been stated with regard to the subject of his notice—the one was the mode in which it was introduced; the other, the time at which it was brought forward. The mode, he declared, he had adopted, because he thought it the least exceptionable mode of any that could be chosen. But it was objected, that no specific proposition had been stated. Had he brought forward any specific motion, he should have been told that he ought first to make out some particular grievance, and then come forward with a proposal of a remedy. Some gentleman had supposed that the association were to frame some motion of reform, which was to be binding on all its members; but, he said, whoever thought so, could not know any thing of its nature. Were the Association to resolve on some particular mode of reform, still it would not be binding on any member of it to agree to that mode and to support it. He declared, he would not be connected with any set of men, who could act on terms so narrow-minded and illiberal. The fact was, that observing an opinion was arising in the country, that was likely to lead to danger, if means to prevent it were not taken in time, a set of gentlemen, of whom he had the honour to be one, had thought that the best possible means of preventing mischief, was to look into the constitution, and to suggest the correction of such abuses as might be found to exist in its practice, in order to take from its enemies that only great ground of their clamour that the constitution was beautiful in theory, but corrupt and abusive in practice. With regard to the time of bringing it forward, Mr. Grey said, that being a time of general tranquillity, and quiet, it was thought peculiarly fit for the discussion of such a subject, and it certainly was much

more so, than times of public distress, or when great matters were in agitation. He alluded to the conduct of that House, since the doctrine of confidence had been introduced. The right honourable gentleman, he said, had been Minister eight years, during which time he had been enabled to make a Spanish armament, and to agree to an ignominious convention. He had also made an armament against Russia, contrary to the express sense of the country. These alone afforded sufficient proof that some reform in the representation of the people in Parliament was necessary, but far was he or any gentleman of the Association from meaning to do any thing that should injure or trench upon the constitution; their object was to preserve and maintain it; an object for which he was willing to sacrifice ever thing that was dear to him.

Mr. RYDER said, he certainly did not mean to detain the House. He rose to observe that at present they had heard it admitted, that there was no discontent in the country; but that in the interim, between that time and the period at which the motion was to be made, discontents and tumults were to be excited. Thus apprised of the intention of the Association, it would become them to prepare to counteract it with vigour and effect. And he did hope, that the Public had too much good sense to resort to speculative remedies for speculative grievance, in preference to actual and practical happiness.

Mr. GREY declared, he had not said any thing that could warrant such an assertion as the honourable gentleman had just made.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, he certainly should not have risen at that time of the night to defend the paper to which he had signed his name, had he thought it liable to the imputations that had been cast on it. He begged leave to say, that it was from the love that he entertained for the principles of the constitution, and a sincere wish to preserve those principles, and hand them down to his posterity that he had signed his name to the paper. He conceived the present to be the best time for making such a motion, when the country was in a state of tranquillity.

If this was not the time, he desired to know what would be the proper time? It was our constitution that made this country a splendid exception to the miseries of anarchy and confusion on the one hand, and on the other to the oppression of despotism. With a view to preserve that constitution pure and inviolate, the Association had been formed, and he had thought necessary to say thus much to guard his own intentions from the misconceptions of some, and the misrepresentations of others.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, something had fallen from the honourable gentleman who had spoken last but one, which had a good deal surprised him. The honourable gentleman had disclaimed any idea of exciting popular discontents. Had not the honourable gentleman said expressly that he meant not to address the House of Commons, but because he wished to address the people, that he had given the notice that day? Mr. Dundas solemnly declared, he did not know what they had been talking about all night, if that were not the object of the notice. He was not for one so much alarmed at the consequences of the notice and of the Association as other gentlemen had expressed themselves to be, nor did he at all dread the discussion of the question. He was persuaded, that the great weight of interest in the kingdom, and a sense of the comforts and real happiness which the people enjoyed, would bear down every dangerous effort that could be made to make them discontented with the present constitution. He took notice of the Associations of Sheffield and Manchester, two great manufacturing towns, whose avowed object was nothing less than the overthrow of the constitution of this country and the building up of some other in its stead; that was also the ultimate object of those who had set this question afloat. He did not mean the gentlemen of the Association in town, but those who had recommended Mr. Paine's book, had publicly praised it, and endeavoured to adopt the wild ideas it contained. He read some words which he had taken down from Mr. Fox's speech, to prove that the right honourable gentle-

man had expressly declared, that he meant to excite the people, and he also quoted Mr. Erskine's speech, to prove that he had unequivocally declared that he aimed at the same end.

Mr. FOX wished to be correctly and fully understood on what he had said. He certainly did use the word excite, because he held it to be a most meritorious thing to excite the attention of the public, and induce them to examine the constitution of the country from time to time, and to look into those abuses which had crept into it, and which if they were suffered to continue uncorrected, would soon get to so much head, as to defy all remedy.

Mr. DUNDAS declared, that the right honourable gentleman had exactly come up to what he had said, and therefore, he concluded, that the right honourable gentleman considered the Association, and Mr. Paine's book, precisely in the same point of view.

Mr. FOX said, he had read but one of Mr. Paine's pamphlets, and that he did not approve it, and from what he had heard of the other, he was inclined to think, that he should not approve of that either, but was not certain whether they had not done good, by leading men to consider of the constitution. In like manner the book of his right honourable friend (Mr. Burke) which he disliked as much as either of them, had, he believed, done some good, because in his opinion, whatever led to a discussion of the subject, was of service.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR, desired to be heard in his own justification; he said, he had so long ago as the year 1785, voted against a reform of the representation in Parliament, but he had since changed his opinion on the subject, an alteration which the conduct of that House had occasioned. It was in consequence of that conduct, that he had signed the papers, being convinced, that it was necessary to go back to the people, and under sanction of their authority, compel that House to do its duty.

Mr. W. SMITH said, he had signed the paper because he had long been persuaded, that if the country were fairly

represented in that House, the general interest could not fail to be promoted.

Sir FRANCIS BASSETT said, he very seldom troubled the House, but he thought it necessary to enter his protest against the measures meditating by those who had signed the Association paper. From his knowledge of those gentlemen, he was persuaded their motives were pure, but he must deprecate the consequences of what they were going to do as mischievous to the last degree. The Association, he said, clearly originated in the Associations of Manchester and Sheffield, and could lead to no good end. His honourable friends put the most difficult task upon those who objected to a reform of Parliament that was imposed on adversaries. They expected them to furnish arguments against a motion that had not been stated. He advised his friends to be cautious in their proceedings, as few people were qualified to "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm." He had often heard, he said, of witches being able to calm the storm when it was raised.

Mr. BAKER said, he could not suffer the House to separate without removing an impression endeavoured to be cast on those, who, like himself, had signed the Association. It had been in direct terms stated, that they originated in the Manchester and Sheffield Associations, and adopted the principles of Mr. Paine's book. So far from it, both the one and the other were expressly disclaimed at the Association, the object of which was to prevent any such pernicious doctrines from obtaining, by coming forward, and calling upon the people to suggest a moderate correction of the abuses that prevailed in the representation of Parliament.

Mr. FRANCIS said—Sir, we are called upon for protests and declarations. I hope the House will indulge me with one minute of their attention, to receive mine among the rest, and the rather, as I have something to retract as well as something to declare. Sir, I never can bend my mind, before any human superiority, so much as to admit that any man in this country, let his rank

and fortune, let his family and connections, be what they may, can have a dearer pledge, a more heartfelt interest, than I have, in the prosperity and happiness, in the peace, and good government of the kingdom. I said I had a retractation to make. To persevere firmly in a system or opinion once adopted, is a good presumptive proof of sincerity; but there may still be a better. It is possible to profess, but hardly possible to retract, an opinion, from any motive but conviction. To give your retractation its character of sincerity, it must be honourably declared, it must be publicly and deliberately avowed, with the reasons that belong to it. One would think, Sir, from the way in which the idea of a parliamentary reform has been treated, that the thing had never been thought of; that the name of it had never been mentioned in this House; that it appeared now, for the first time, a perfect and absolute novelty in the minds of men. Yet, since I have sat in Parliament, it has happened to me twice to give my vote against different plans of reform, introduced by that right honourable gentleman, who now treats the very idea of a reform of any kind, not only as too criminal and extravagant to be encouraged by any rational mind, but as if, in fact, it had never occurred to his own. The part I took, on those occasions, was rather negative than affirmative. I was guided by the natural influence of respectable authority; by plausibilities and doubts, by possibilities and apprehensions; but above all, I myself doubted, and therefore I stood still. I refrained from action, as all men ought to do, who are not sure they are acting right. My present opinion is positive, and for that reason is a proper ground of action. It has been taught me by reflection, and inculcated on my mind by the best of all instructors, *my own experience*. It is the view and contemplation of doctrines and principles, introduced from day to day, and of transactions in the last and present Parliament, which have removed my doubts of the necessity of a reform in the actual construction of the House of Commons; doctrines

new and dangerous ;—principles false and destructive ;—transactions ruinous and disgraceful ; all which I saw encouraged and propagated, instead of being condemned, as they ought to be. My opinion has been deliberately formed on the evidence of facts and my own observation, and never shall yield to clamour or to numbers, or to any other influence but that of conviction. We are accused, in violent terms, of uniting with parties, with whom we have no communication, and of supporting principles, and abetting factions, which we have renounced, in the strongest terms that the English language could suggest. I had some share in the construction of the Declaration and Address ; and surely I am, or ought to be, a competent judge of the true intent and meaning of those papers. Unless I have lived to these years without understanding my native tongue, I may safely challenge the most acute and malignant observer, to point out a single sentence, or even a word, to justify the atrocious charges brought against us. You look for our principles not in our declarations, but in the supposed views and projects of other men, whose views and projects, if any such exist, we have expressly renounced and disclaimed. As to the object we avow, we may or may not succeed in it. On that point I am not sanguine ; but I am perfectly sure that they, who have recourse to mere calumny and invectives, have not taken the best method to defeat us.

Sir WILLIAM MILNER stated his sentiments to the House, as adverse to the promised motion for a reform in parliamentary representation. He stated what had passed in Yorkshire in his presence upon a Grand Jury, before whom bills were found against certain rioters at Sheffield ; and it was evident, that the political opinions that had been disseminated among the manufacturers had done an infinite deal of mischief. He expatiated upon the imprudence of agitating questions that could only tend to excite popular clamour and discontent.

Colonel HENRY WINCHCOMB HARTLEY rose, shortly to state, that he was, upon the whole, against a reform, as unnecessary and tending rather to endanger the constitution, than strengthen it. He recapitulated its excellencies, and dwelt upon the real happiness enjoyed under it. He said, he hoped we should long reap the benefit of our mixed form of Government.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS moved the order of the day, which was a Committee of the whole House on the bill for building an Office for Masters in Chancery, and for depositing deeds belonging to the Suitors of the Court, for providing a suitable number of clerks to the Accountant General, &c.

A short debate took place. The Master of the Rolls and Mr. Mitford supported the principle and the provisions of the bill.

Mr. HUSSEY opposed the bill, and contended, that the interest and dividends on the 300,000*l.* proposed to be laid out, should accumulate for the benefit of the suitors, a part of whose property it was, and proportionably divided amongst them; a share should be paid to each suitor, when the principal was paid.

Mr. FRANCIS concurred with Mr. Hussey in disapproving of the bill.

The bill passed through the Committee.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 1st May.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS rose, to remind the House, that on a former night, being limited in his object, by the decision of the House, he had expressed a doubt, how far he could with propriety continue to hold in his hands, a business which had been so materially altered from the manner in which he had introduced it; upon mature reflection that doubt was confirmed, and any gentleman, who would give himself the trouble of adverting to the subject, he was per-

suaded would see, how impossible it was for him to vote for any of those resolutions, restricted as the first had already been. The best thing he could do, therefore, was to give back the whole business into the hands of those, who had originally introduced the discussion into that House. With that view, he desired them to take notice, that he should offer no bill in its early stages, but when the bill should be in a Committee, if it did not appear to him to come up to the ideas that struck him, as being proper upon the subject, he would either in the Committee, or upon the report, oppose it, and should think it his duty to take the sense of the House upon it.

Mr. BEAUFOY (as chairman of the late Committee) brought up the report of the resolution, agreed to by a Committee of the whole House on Saturday morning, which having been read a first time.

Lord SHEFFIELD said, he was by no means disposed in that stage of the business to enter into a discussion of the slave trade; he should content himself at that time with saying, that all the speeches he had heard, confirmed the opinion he had entertained from the beginning. That a splendid abuse of words had not captivated him. That the miserable half-measure of abolition at the end of three years, was the most contemptible of all, not having the glory, if it deserved that appellation, of immediate abolition, nor the merit of gradual abolition. He said, his principal motive for rising was to notice an assertion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a late debate, namely, that the population of the islands warranted immediate abolition, and that the negroes were in a state of increase. He thought the assertions at the time very extraordinary. He observed the right honourable gentleman's calculations made great impression. He had since inquired, and he had the strongest reasons to believe them erroneous and unfounded, and he had authority to say, that the most satisfactory and respectable evidence might be brought to the bar to disprove them; but as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had offered

to shew the vouchers, and grounds, on which he formed his opinion, he did not wish to take any step until he had seen them. He said, he was sure it would appear, that there was a decrease in Jamaica, and in all the islands, almost without exception, and that it was poverty arising from four or five bad crops, and the price of slaves being raised in consequence of the regulating act, which prevented several of the islands from importing negroes, and by no means an increase in the population.

Mr. Chancellor PITT declared, that the noble Lord had a little misunderstood what had been said on the subject. He had never said, that the population was adequate to the cultivation in all the islands, but had expressly spoken of particular islands, mentioning the old islands as the islands he peculiarly referred to. With regard to the island of Jamaica, he had stated the situation of that island, as varying in respect to its population, under the varying circumstances that had attended it, and had attributed the mortalities, to what he had every reason to believe they were occasioned by, viz. the importation of new slaves. As to the vouchers which the noble Lord talked of, he had no new vouchers to produce, nor had he ever talked of any. His vouchers were already on the table, being nothing more than the report of the Privy Council, and the other papers which had been so long before the House. He had before said that his calculations, extracted from those papers, he was willing to shew to any gentleman who was desirous of seeing them; and if the noble Lord would refer to them, he would have only to examine whether he had correctly added two and two together. He might possibly have been mistaken. The noble Lord had made another observation with respect to the importation of sugar. He had lately had occasion to pay a good deal of attention to that subject, and it was well known that the West-India merchants expected that the crops this year would be much larger than they ever before were; and especially from those islands where the importations had ceased, and where it had been said the planters had fallen short of their sufficiency of negroes, from not having been able to go to the expence of supplying themselves, which was of itself a pretty convincing

proof, that the West-India islands, generally speaking, might be duly cultivated, (all idea of new cultivation being given up) without a farther continuation of the importation of African negroes.

Lord CARHAMPTON took notice of Mr. Secretary Dundas having resigned the whole business into the hands of the two right honourable gentlemen, whose superior talents, he said, so well entitled them to lead the respective sides of the House. Any opposition to them, his Lordship said, would probably prove fruitless. He would only, therefore, say, that as the power was theirs, so with them be the responsibility!

Mr. BAILEY stated to the House, that since the discussion on the subject had taken place, he had received a letter from Barbadoes, declaring that six or seven hundred new slaves had been recently sold in the town of Kingston.

Mr. W. SMITH declared, he was sure that nothing he could offer, would be deserving of more notice, than what came from any other gentleman; but he would venture to say, that he had paid more attention to the calculations in question, than the noble Lord could have bestowed on them; and he would undertake to bring the most positive proof, that the population of the islands had been gradually increasing, from 1755 to 1788, and the importation had been gradually decreasing all that period. Mr. Smith said, he grounded his calculations on the accounts, delivered in from the islands by their own agent, Mr. Fuller; and therefore their accuracy was to be little doubted; at least, it was not likely that they would be more favourable to their side of the question than the facts fully warranted.

Mr. CAWTHORNE said, he should take up but little of the time of the House. He declared he was sorry the Secretary of State had given up the business. He considered it as an inauspicious omen. Mr. Cawthorne reprobated the measure that had been taken of limiting the abolition to the year 1796. An immediate abolition, he should have considered as far preferable. By what they had done, they had entailed misery on those slaves in all the islands, by compelling them to remain slaves from generation to generation; Mr. Cawthorne concluded with declaring that if there were any motion that was

more peculiarly liable to be productive of danger than another, it was that which the House had adopted. He laid in his claim to oppose the bill in a subsequent stage of its progress.

Sir WILLIAM DOLBEN said, he had purposely avoided mentioning anything of a bill, which must be renewed in some way or other that session, until the House should have come to some decision on the great question of abolition. The propriety of continuing the bill in question, as it was, or with alteration, would depend altogether on the way in which the bill founded on the resolutions should be disposed of; but he should imagine it would better suit the dignity of the House, and the regularity of their proceedings, to make the regulating bill a part of the new bill.

Sir JOHN SINCLAIR said, before the House agreed to the resolution, he thought it proper to ask, as the right honourable Secretary of State had given up the business, what would become of the other resolutions? The Secretary of State had brought forward a motion for gradually abolishing the slave trade, and he had proposed resolutions for the purpose of meliorating the condition of the negroes in the West-India islands. They had come to a resolution to abolish the slave trade in 1796. How far that sort of abolition was consistent with any sense, which our language gave to the word gradual, Sir John said, he would leave to the consideration of the House; but he desired to know what was meant to be done with respect to the address to His Majesty, to beseech His Majesty to take measures, by negotiation with foreign courts, for establishing the unanimous concurrence of the powers of Europe for a complete abolition of the slave trade, Sir John stated this resolution as a most important one, and therefore wished for some satisfaction on that head.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, although he had understood his right honourable friend to have given up all concern in the conduct of the bill, because by the decision of the Committee, it no longer went to the description of the extent that his right honourable friend had suggested, yet he certainly had not understood him to have relinquished his intention of moving an address to His Majesty for the purpose mentioned by the honourable Baronet; he declared he had no doubt that his right

honourable friend would make such a motion, but if he should decline it, he would certainly make it himself.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt then moved, "that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider farther of means for abolishing the slave trade," and previous to the Speaker's leaving the chair, he thought it proper to observe, that from what had already passed that day, he should rather imagine, that it was not the wish of gentlemen to deliver their opinions upon the subject in that stage of the business, but to allow such of the resolutions, as should be thought necessary to move to be voted, in order to ground a bill upon them, to which, when the blanks should be filled up, gentlemen would be able to give their opinion with more advantage. The first resolution was one, he said, on which he should conceive there could be no difference of opinion, as it respected the tonnage of the shipping which he meant to move generally to be limited; he said, he thought it proper to mention it in that stage of the business.

Lord SHEFFIELD said, there could not be a moment's doubt on the necessity of limiting the numbers to be imported if the time was to be limited, otherwise the scramble on the coast of Africa would be horrible; and it would be objectionable on the part of the islands, lest they should be overwhelmed with crouds of all ages of unfortunate creatures, more than the islands could on a sudden subsist. He added, that the mode of limiting would be found difficult; perhaps the best manner would be by resolving that no more ships should be licensed than were already engaged in the trade. Thus the amount of the compensation to the African merchants would be much diminished, the islands would be supplied, and would not be liable to be suddenly overstocked with more negroes than have been lately annually imported.

The question was then put, that the Speaker leave the chair, which having been carried, Mr. Beaufoy took his seat at the table.

In the Committee, Mr. Pitt moved the second, third, sixth eighth, and ninth of the printed resolutions introduced by Mr. Dundas, with modifications and amendments.

The resolutions were voted as moved, ordered to be reported that evening, for the sake of their being printed, and the

Committee was afterwards, upon motion, ordered to sit on Friday.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 2d May.

The resolutions entered into, on the motion of Mr. Chancellor Pitt, on the slave trade, were read a second time.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then observed, that for the prevention of delay in the progress of this business, it appeared to him proper that the other House of Parliament should have, as early as possible, the outlines of the plan to be proposed on this subject laid before them. He therefore moved, "That these resolutions be communicated to the Lords, and that their concurrence be desired thereto." Ordered.

He then moved, "That a conference be desired with the Lords, on a subject highly important to the justice and honour of the British nation." Ordered.

And "That the Earl of Mornington do go to the Lords, to desire that conference." Ordered.

The House adjourned.

